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PUNCH



MARCH
2
1949

Vol. CCXVI
No 5647

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Regd

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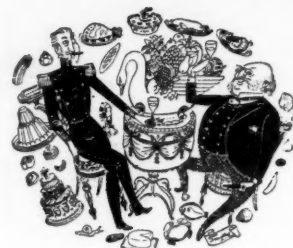


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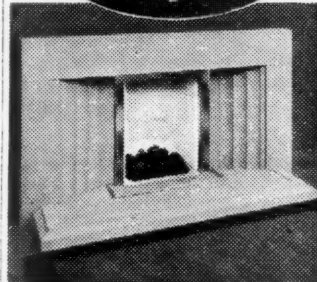
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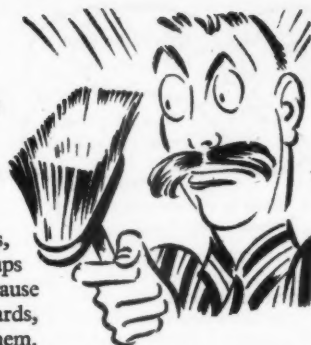


J. Marais 1946

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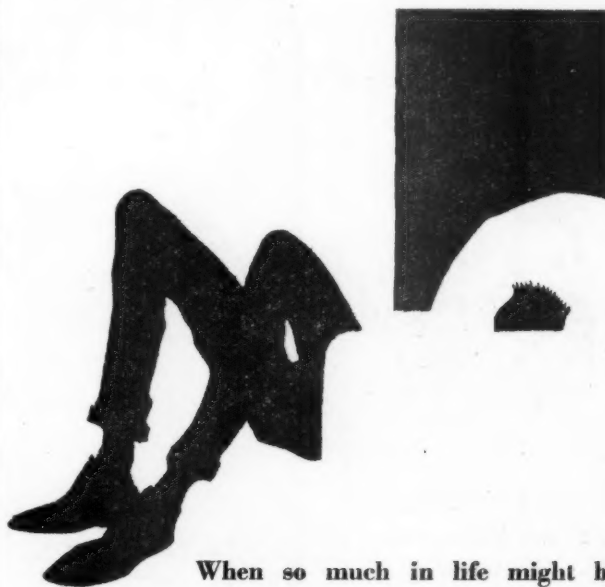
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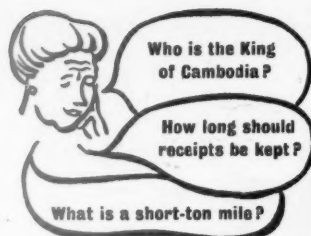
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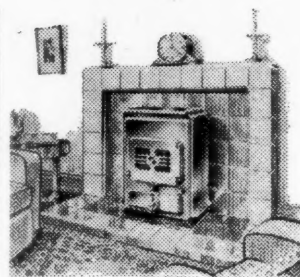


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LOTUS



The row of spikes set at an angle on the inner edge of the sole remain firmly embedded and retain their grip when the foot is tilted at the end of the stroke.

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Twickenham



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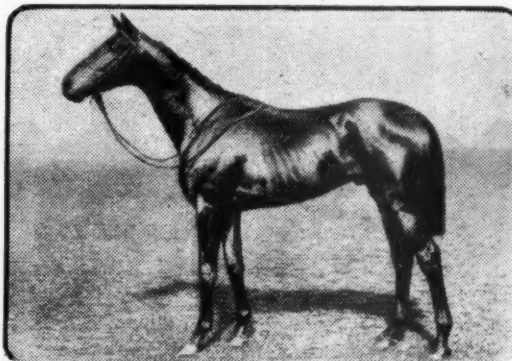
BURROUGH'S Gin

IT IS TRIPLE DISTILLED!

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OF FAMOUS RACEHORSES



PERSIMMON (1893) bay colt by St. Simon—Perdita II

Bred and owned by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales—later King Edward VII—Persimmon was the first to win the St. Leger for a member of the Royal Family. He was trained by the late Richard Marsh and ran nine times altogether; in spite of his being beaten twice, his total winnings amounted to £34,706. Persimmon's successes included the Derby, St. Leger, Jockey Club Stakes, Ascot Gold Cup and Eclipse Stakes. He died on February 18th, 1908, and his skeleton is preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

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"The World's Best Known Turf Accountants"



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**WHAT DO
YOU KNOW?**

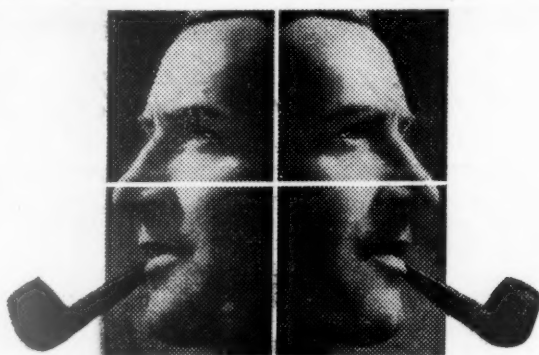
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You can get such a book from W. H. Smith & Son. You'll be
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Do you find yourself reaching for your pipe—and thinking
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satisfies. Because it burns cool and sweet to the last shred,
leaving no wasteful dottle, you get more satisfaction from
every pipe, and more pipes from every packet! Six blends—
foil-wrapped for freshness.

4 1/2 oz.	4 5/2 oz.
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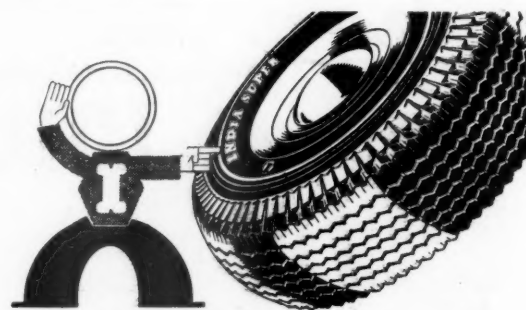
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BY DOBIE'S OF PAISLEY

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MOTOR MOWERS
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**The famous *Red Ring* returns
to proclaim anew our pride of
craftsmanship in**





PUNCH

OR

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXVI No. 5647

March 2 1949

Charivaria

THE writer of an article on children's pocket-money points out that the traditional Saturday penny doesn't go far towards buying sweets nowadays. On the other hand it goes further and further towards purchasing the weekly meat ration.

"Recipe—3 egg whites, 1 lb. icing sugar, ascetic acid 8-12 drops."

Just that touch of austerity!

Scottish journal.



A cardsharp operating on the South Coast left one resort very suddenly. It is thought that he may have cut for Deal.

Thieves recently broke into a harness factory. Scotland Yard is believed to be hopeful that they may have left traces behind.

Many people are reluctant when asked by the police to take part in an identification parade. One solution is to place the suspect in a queue.

"Diving suits and fishermen's frocks and bloomers will be coupon-free after March 1."—*Daily Mail*.

We must go down to the sea again.

Dissatisfied cinemagoers at Reading received their money back. Company promoters regard this as a dangerous precedent.

A foreign visitor to London who tried to jump a bus-queue confused the conductor by repeatedly stating that he was ambitious. All he meant was that he was anxious to get on.

"There has been almost a revolution since the last General Election," claims a Government supporter. Though he hastens to add that this doesn't necessarily mean we're practically back where we started from.

"ANCIENT SANDWICH. ONLY £5,500."

Estate advt. in *"The Times."*

Real ham?

"Seventy years ago I used to make circular tours in South London on my penny-farthing," says a correspondent. Round and round the Oval when Surrey were batting?

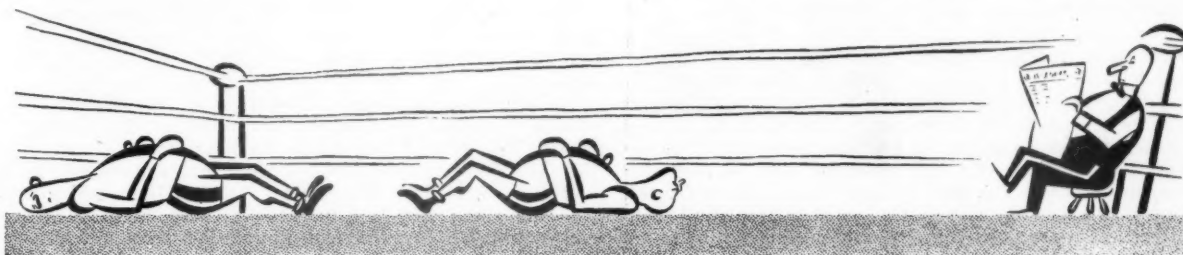
Modern communications bring the people closer together. A Londoner, for instance, is only about an hour's distance from the Midlands by phone.

"The writing is undistinguished, there are loose strings hanging about, and the end is disappointingly abrupt, and yet—you read on."

Book review in *Sunday paper*.

Anything good in the endpapers?

Two boxers knocked each other out simultaneously. The winner was the one who first said "Where am I?"



報畫默幽說

EVEN in England there are readers who have told me from time to time that they do not understand the Yo Mor of Bun-choo, and it is in the hope that these few words of mine may help them a little—but wait a minute: I am too precipitate.

A correspondent has very kindly sent me a copy of the Shanghai *Ta-Kung-Pao*, which contains an article on Humorous Illustrated Papers, and somewhere about the top or the middle or the bottom of the page (whichever it may be) reproduces the cover of *Punch*. This proves that art knows no frontiers, though writing does, for I cannot enjoy the letterpress in the *Ta-Kung-Pao* nearly as much as I should like to do. My correspondent, however, explains "The title of the article is in large type above the figure of a short man standing with his back to the reader. Romanized it runs:

SHWOR YO MOR HWAR BOW

The two characters Yo Mor (the second being also pronounced MAY) mean mysterious, dark, secret, but *here* they have no meaning, they simply reproduce the sound of our word humour. The characters for *Punch* are pronounced Bun-Choo, this being the nearest the Chinese gets to the sound Punch." It seems to me very sporting of the Chinese to try so hard. If I have the thing right, it means that the East has wrestled in agony with the terrible Yo Mor of the West and given up the whole Hwar Bow as a bad joke or a bad job. Confident, however, in his knowledge of art, as opposed to letters, the writer goes on, and this is the translation of the first part of what he says:

"Amongst perfectly proper humorous illustrated papers the English *Punch* and the Soviet fortnightly *Crocodile* are highly popular. *Punch* was started over a hundred years ago in 1841, and its front page has not been changed since. The title means a short stout fellow, and is in itself intriguing. The paper's carefully edited single-picture cartoons and connected serial-like pictures are drawn with concise confluent strokes and portray good-natured and interesting themes.

Punch's pictures, whether linking episodes in a single theme, or portraying a single conception, are always original. Though it has letterpress as well as pictures, it is unlike the American *Coronet*, *New Yorker* or *Gentleman*, which are not distinctively cartoonist, but magazines making a popular appeal with the aid of amusing pictures.

The Soviet *Crocodile*, published in Moscow, contains popular satires, such as 'Jokes of a Barber,' 'Eating Walnuts with False Teeth.' Since the war it has included more political cartoons than formerly, and cartoons relating to reconstruction, while its artistic and literary cartoons are serious and highly coloured. Their lines are delicately drawn with pale-blue and pink tints against backgrounds of black-and-white.

There is no purely humorous picture paper in America, whose newspapers however, are full of episodic picture serials. These cannot be compared with *Punch's* episodic pictures. They are too long and crude, not like *Punch's*, which are compact and mature."

So much for American pictures, their youth, their impurity and their want of compactitude. But I am not satisfied about the *Crocodile*. How does that compare with Bun-choo? In the ordinary Bun-choo and Judy show the crocodile is, I think, defeated, and Bun-choo's staff or club is pushed down its throat, but I doubt whether this performance would be very popular in Moscow. In any case I imagine that citizens of the Soviet Union are compelled to see the jokes in the *Crocodile* under pain of death or lifelong imprisonment—a regulation which I have always advocated in this country for ourselves; but in vain.

The Government wobbles from policy to policy and we have to get along as best we can. It is good, however, to learn that Mr. Bun-choo's artists hold their own in Shanghai. May there never be a time when they have to say with A. E. Housman:

The laurels all are cut,
We'll to the woods yo mor. EVOE.

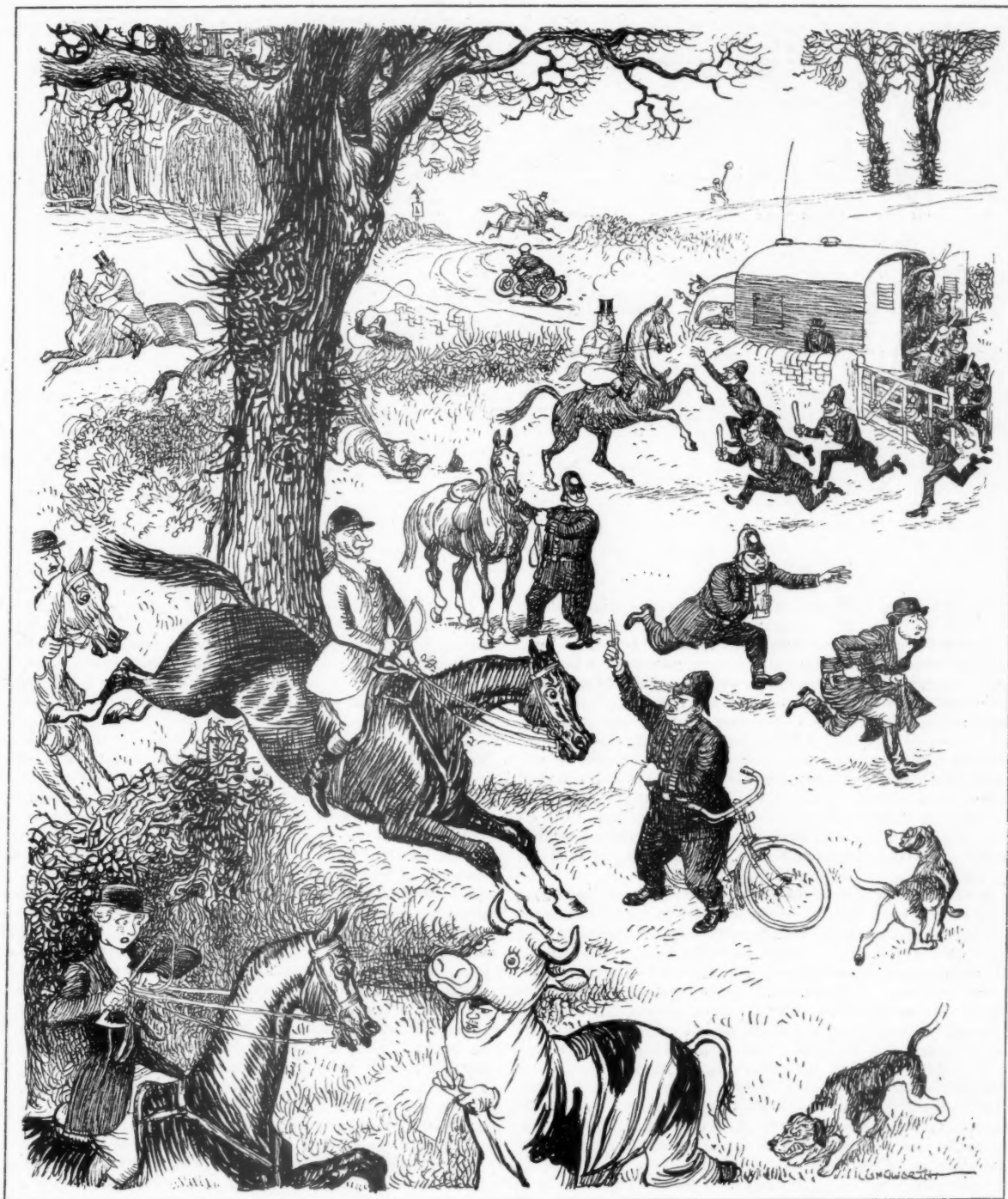
Is There a Psychiatrist on the Train?

IN the slack midday period you may often see a suburban train making its unromantic way to London with hardly more passengers aboard than there are compartments. Those who travel up habitually on the eight-twenty and back on the five-fifty will scarcely believe this, but it is so. Granted the possibility, no Englishman will be surprised to learn that when it occurs the passengers, so far as is humanly possible, are disposed one to a compartment.

Foreigners are said to find this desire for privacy in trains a fascinating English eccentricity. They take in it the same sort of pleasure that the English tourist derives from the spectacle of a number of Frenchmen doing anything French—talking, for instance. Myself, I get no enjoyment from it. On the contrary, it is excessively annoying to me to find that by the time the train arrives at my own suburban station dispersion has reached such a pitch that there is nowhere left for me to sit. I run up and down the platform like a distracted hen, peering into

compartment after compartment. A porter shouts at me. The guard whistles or waves his flag or both. I am forced, rather than let the train proceed without me, to jump into a carriage already occupied by a man with an open briefcase on his knees. He gives me a look, which I have no difficulty in interpreting, takes his feet off the seat opposite, and makes little petulant movements with his papers. "Why," he asks, "with the whole of a practically empty train to choose from, do you have to come shoving your way in here? And anyway," he adds, "your shoe-lace is undone."

He says this to himself, not being the sort of man to provoke unpleasantness, but I can read him like an open book. This is not telepathy or anything of that kind, but the ability to put oneself in the other man's place, said to be the mark of a great general. I should have said just the same thing myself, if our positions had been reversed, except that I should have left out the bit about the shoe-lace. The fact is that the laces of men who intrude into



"A-HUNTING WE WILL GO!"



"I tell you I can only get help on Tuesday mornings."

compartments already occupied by me are invariably done up, so that I lose half the advantage I might otherwise have gained. I cannot tell why this should be. My own custom, when I leap hurriedly into a railway carriage, is to sit down heavily in the corner seat immediately next the door and assert my right to be there by leaning back with my hat over my eyes and throwing my right leg carelessly over my left. It is this latter movement that makes the ends of my shoe-lace rattle against the lower part of the carriage door, thus drawing my attention to the fact that it has come untied. I am so familiar with this small tinny sound that I can pick it out in an instant (even from so closely allied a noise as that of a waistcoat button rolling under a carriage seat), and I do not have to glance down to know what has occurred.

It is a curious feature of suburban travel nowadays that because anybody has an obvious right to be in any compartment whatever, no satisfactory way of asserting that right presents itself. I want to make this clear. In the old days, when class distinctions existed on suburban lines, I used occasionally to take the more expensive ticket; not often, but occasionally. On these occasions, the moment I heard my laces rattling on the door I could be absolutely certain that the thought "Got into a First by mistake" was flashing through the other man's mind. This was a definite form of attack and correspondingly easy to counter. One had only to draw the white ticket from one's waistcoat pocket and glance casually at its face as if mildly anxious to make sure where one was supposed to be going. The situation was then clear, and the other man was at liberty to mind his own damn business. But what is the use of pulling out a third-class ticket in a third-class compartment? If the man with the brief-case is going to think anything at all he is going to think that you thought he might think you had only a Workman's, and I am blown if I am going to have a man of his type thinking a thing like that.

It isn't that there is anything derogatory about having a workman's ticket as such; of course not. What is derogatory is the suggestion that one should need to prove that one was not using a workman's ticket on a *midday train*, when of course it would not be operative. Any such suggestion would simply be playing into the other man's hands.

Meanwhile my shoe-lace is untied and the problem is to do it up in a manner clearly indicating that though such a thing has never occurred to one in public before, one is not the man to be disconcerted by so trivial a mishap. This is more difficult than it sounds; perhaps because the more practice one gets at it, the further removed must the appearance be from the reality. I like to glance down casually at my right foot for a start, perhaps brushing a speck from my knee at the same time, and then bend slightly forward with a more intent gaze, such as a man might direct at a scorpion on his instep. I lean a little sideways now, my eyebrows rising perhaps a quarter of an inch, not more, and after a while stretch my left hand down to let the tactile senses verify the incredible evidence of my eyes. The swift frown that wrinkles my forehead at this stage bodes ill for the valet who laced me up. He will be lucky if he gets more than a week's notice. Finally, my mind made up to the performance of an unfamiliar task, I uncross my legs and, raising the right foot a modest distance from the floor, re-knot the lace with firm, swift movements of my well-manicured fingers.

Right.

It only remains to lean back, with a light cough, against the cushions and, throwing my left leg for the sake of variety over my right, gaze with tolerant interest at the flying houses. If in the course of this latter manoeuvre there is a small tinny sound against the carriage door, it simply means that this is one of my unlucky days.

H. F. E.

Storm Over Public Relations

I SAY, chaps, I vote we have another press conference!"

As the clear boyish tenor rang through the room a storm of booing and cat-calling broke out which could be heard, I should imagine, on the other side of Whitehall.

"Groan!"

"Ouch!"

"Yaroo!"

"Chuck him out!"

"What a feeble wheeze!"

It was tea-time in the Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Co-ordination. In itself, perhaps, that explains little, so it may be as well to say that it was in fact three o'clock on a Thursday afternoon, that the boyish voice belonged to young Edgar Pickles-Armitage, the youngest P.R.O., and that the chorus of protest came from the other four hundred odd P.R.O.s on duty that day.

We must have looked a hard-bitten cynical crowd as we lounged about the big cosily furnished office, puffing at our short clay pipes and occasionally hitching up our trousers in a nonchalant manner. Yet we were not really as nonchalant as we seemed. Beneath the pin-striped duffle-coats and wind-jackets not a few anxious hearts were beating. For that morning a memorandum had been received from the Planning Staff of the Ministry, drawing attention to the fact that although the establishment of the Ministry only allowed for four hundred and seventy P.R.O.s, no fewer than seven hundred and fifty-six were actually working in the building. "It is considered," the memorandum concluded, "that steps should be taken to justify the retention of officials who would appear to be held in excess of establishment."

"Boys," growled old Mothwell, the Chief P.R.O., "we got to do something. The Planners may be here at any moment. This very afternoon perhaps"—he gave a low whistle of dismay. The oldest P.R.O. stirred uneasily in his bunk next the stove—it was very seldom he left it now. "I don't understand," wailed the pathetic old man. "We're happy here, aren't we? Why should they want to disturb us like this? It's not right. Why can't we all be happy together, as we used to be? I don't understand."

We others, however, understood only too well that something had to be done if we were to avert the threatened blow. Somehow we had to justify our existence—all seven hundred and fifty-six of us. But it was not really surprising that we had greeted young Pickles-

Armitage's well-meant suggestion with derision. He was too young to remember the last press conference. We remembered it with horrible vividness. Everything had gone wrong from the start. Orders for printing the hand-outs—a résumé of the Act for the Nationalization of Window-Cleaners—had been given well in advance, but they only arrived from the printers five minutes before the conference was due to begin, when they were found to consist of supplements to a children's paper, printed in six colours and recounting the adventures of Mac the Masochist. Nor was this all. Invitations had been sent to the whole of the national press, but the only newspaperman who turned up in the end was the editor of the *Caitness Herald and Teetotal Advertiser*, who had mistaken the conference for an abstainers' meeting. He was so annoyed when he discovered his mistake that he handed in his hand-out and stamped out of the room in a fury, leaving over five hundred P.R.O.s regarding each other blankly.

No more press conferences—we were all agreed on that. But what on earth were we to do? One by one various suggestions were made—a conducted tour for Tibetan journalists to the new pit-head pin-table saloons at Seaham Harbour, an exhibition of seventeenth-century snuff-boxes which could be sent round the world with a group of P.R.O.s in charge, a three-hundred-page brochure, "Public Relations Through the Ages," for distribution to local salvage authorities. All were howled down.

"Don't you see?" said Mothwell. "We must have something that everybody can join in. That's the only way we can make these fools realize that we need every one of these seven hundred and fifty-six P.R.O.s—yes, and seven hundred and fifty-six more."

Someone suggested a gymnastic display, and someone else pointed out that we had enough men to form sixty-eight Association football-teams, together with a rowing-eight or a couple of bridge-fours to spare. But Mothwell doubted if these athletic activities fell within the sphere of Public Relations proper.

We were near panic by this time, and as the afternoon wore on without any decision being reached the cry of "Every man for himself!" went up. Each man was determined, if the worst came to the worst and the planners came round that very afternoon, that he at any rate should escape the axe.

Some seized typewriters and began to compose hand-outs at random, and others made rough lay-outs for advertisements in the press calling for greater efforts all round. The tougher element, veterans who had survived a score of economy campaigns, vowed that no planner should take them alive, and prepared for resistance. Fountain-pens were filled and make-shift barricades assembled. In the uproar, no one noticed that Mothwell had quietly slipped from the room.

Towards nightfall, when the confusion was at its height, footsteps were heard in the corridor. "It's the Planners!" shrieked a dozen voices. "Let them have it, boys!" But we need not have worried. It was only the face of Mothwell which appeared round the door. "It's all right," he said. "I've fixed things up. They've seen reason. They've amended the Establishment." A ragged cheer went up. "Then we can all stay?" faltered Pickles-Armitage. "Better than that," said Mothwell. "They—they've increased the Establishment. You'll never guess how many P.R.O.s we're allowed now. One thousand one hundred and thirty-seven. That means three hundred and eighty-one new ones." He held up his hand to quieten the noise. "And, boys, I've got a surprise for you. I picked the new ones up on the way here. Come on, lads," he said, putting his head into the corridor. "Come right in."

And in marched three hundred and eighty-one new Public Relations Officers to mingle with the jubilant crowd within. The cheering could be heard not merely on the other side of Whitehall, but throughout the Metropolitan Police area. And far away, above the roar of London's traffic, the noise may have come reassuringly, perhaps, to some official deep in the green belt, pondering the site of satellite towns to be.

Office Romance

DICTATING to his typist,
So pretty, neat and prim,
He little thought that one day
She would dictate to him.

"Double Fronted Fruiterer and Greengrocer, nr. Coulsdon, Surrey . . . Owner unwell."—Advt. in "Financial Times."

But the greengrocer feels twice the man he was.

At the Pictures

The History of Mr. Polly—The Treasure of the Sierra Madre—Unfaithfully Yours



[The History of Mr. Polly]

POLLY PUTS THE KETTLE ON.

Mr. Johnson EDWARD CHAPMAN
Alfred Polly JOHN MILLS
Miriam Larkins BETTY ANN DAVIES

THE History of Mr. Polly (Director: ANTHONY PÉLISSIER) turns out to have been a book remarkably suitable for filming. Both the Dickensian "richness" of its characters and its profusion of simple, essentially farcical incident are qualities the screen can use with great effect; and the principal character's habit of soliloquy is also very helpful. Returning to the book, I'm astonished to find how faithfully the thing has been done; if there are any soliloquies here that weren't in the original, I failed to notice them, and again and again, bearing in mind the customary insouciance of screen-writers, one is surprised to find almost every detail of a scene as WELLS described it. Not that such care is by any means necessarily helpful to a film; more often than not, indeed, it would be the worst way to set about making one. But I think it succeeds here; JOHN MILLS gives a varied and endearing performance as the hero, and it is unlikely that even the most

passionate fans of any of the minor characters will be upset or disappointed at the way they are portrayed. That is saying a great deal, when a story is as popular and well known as this.

The message of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (Director: JOHN HUSTON)—the title on the screen has six words, though the publicity gives it only four—seems to be that finding gold is the acid test of character. The assertion is made many times in sterner and more uncompromising terms, to the effect that finding gold will ruin any character; but to agree with that version you have to accept *Dobbs* (HUMPHREY BOGART) as a good man to begin with. You have to regard his subsequent behaviour as evidence of the deterioration wrought by gold, rather than as a revelation of his natural tendencies; and you have to ignore the fact that *Curtin* (TIM HOLT) remains a good man all the time, gold or no gold. The film is the harsh but enthralling story of how these two set out from Tampico with a garrulous elderly

prospector (prospector) named *Howard* (WALTER HUSTON), find gold, mine it with great labour and start bringing it back. *Dobbs's* character proves unequal to the strain; what with one thing and another nobody winds up with any gold, and only the old man comes out of the adventure undamaged. One might have guessed it from the first; as played by Mr. HUSTON he is a wonderfully entertaining personage with an air of indestructibility. It is an

impressive picture, its grimness often relieved by brilliant, interesting detail of the Mexican scene, and very striking visually. The strong, sharp contrast sometimes gives the photography almost stereoscopic effect.

Unfaithfully Yours (Director: PRESTON STURGES) offers the characteristic Sturges mixture of slapstick farce and melodrama. The story—which, as usual, Mr. STURGES wrote himself—is hardly meant to be taken seriously: it deals with the suspicion of an orchestral conductor (REX HARRISON) that his wife is unfaithful, his three visions of what he will do about it (each according to the mood of the work he is conducting at the time—unemotional efficiency at the job of conducting is not, of course, allowed for), and the way each plan went wrong when tried. As before in Sturges pictures, the recalcitrance of material objects is responsible for much of the fun; and shatteringly funny some of it is, because of Mr. STURGES's extreme skill—it's technical, mechanical skill as much as anything else—in putting it over. I can't remember when I last gave such an energetic laugh as was dragged out of me by the scene of the conductor's difficulties with a home recording-machine. That is an example of the director's way of getting a crescendo of effect from a situation, but his other merits are shown more often—in the oddities of the minor characters, in such tiny comic details as the complacent chirp of a zipped-open brief-case, in the amusingly literary rhetoric of the conductor. The whole affair is very good fun; and among other things to enjoy is some spirited orchestral playing of Rossini, Wagner and Tchaikowsky. R. M.



[The Treasure of the Sierra Madre]

GOLD-DIGGERS

Dobbs HUMPHREY BOGART
Howard WALTER HUSTON

At the Opera

Carmen (SADLER'S WELLS)
Much Ado About Nothing
 (TOWN HALL, OXFORD)

TYRONE GUTHRIE'S production of *Carmen* at Sadler's Wells is breathlessly exciting. He has gone back to the novel of Prosper Mérimée, whose *Carmen* is a creature of the gutter, full of the fierce recklessness of the outlaw gipsy folk and of sudden flaming passions that burn out as suddenly as they flare up. She is a being whose very villainess is magnificent. For her as for her people life is as sweet as it is short, and freedom the more precious for the prison bars that may at any moment close upon it.

The keynote of this *Carmen* is its reeking vitality, conveyed paradoxically enough by the exercise on the part of the producer and designer of the utmost restraint, and by intense dramatic concentration. The result is a *Carmen* which none who sees it will soon forget, and it is achieved without elaborate scenery or costumes, with no ballet and only a small chorus. Mr. GUTHRIE has realized that the music itself is so full of colour that to make colour play an effective part on the stage it must be used as sparingly as possible. The setting of the first act, accordingly, depicting a mean quarter of Seville, is all in black, white and shades of grey, the only touch of colour being provided by the red roses worn by *Carmen* in her hair and at her waist. In this act the handling of the chorus of cigarette-girls is masterly, and succeeds perfectly in suggesting the ugliness of low life and its underlying passion and violence. This comes to the surface in the riot that breaks out when *Carmen* stabs another girl in a quarrel and again when the girls, hating both *Carmen* and the men that crowd round her, scream out the words of her song "If I love—then take care!" jeering and laughing at *Don José* as he lies prostrate at the foot of the steps where *Carmen* in escaping has pushed him. This is not in the score, but it is a most effective touch.

Acts II and III are performed in near-darkness, the scenery being barely suggested. The dark garden, encircled by a wall, of the tavern of Lillas Pastia is like the evil conspiracy that takes place within it, and like the conflict in the soul of *Don José*. It throws into relief the braggadocio entry of *Escamillo* (his white bowler was something of a shock), the Toreador song and the truly brilliantly sung quintet by smugglers and their girl accomplices. The

smugglers' den of Act III consists merely of an ingenious arrangement of curtains and netting, but in the brooding darkness the card-reading scene becomes a vivid vignette.

If the producer and designer had any doubts about the wisdom of their dark palette for the first three acts, they must have been dispelled by the long-drawn "Ah!" that the sight of the brilliant colours of the last act drew from the audience as the curtain went up. Here, where the passions of the drama find their climax, is where colour is needed—violent pink, yellow, orange, blue, white, blood-red, gold—and where it tells most. *Don José* is drunk when he appears, but this, though one dislikes it at first, is in keeping with the general conception, and underlines the degradation into which *Carmen's* love has dragged him.

The cast suffered badly from first-night nerves, and their intonation suffered accordingly; but ANNA POLLAK is a very good *Carmen* and will be better still. JAMES JOHNSTON is a splendid *Don José*; his voice has developed greatly during the past few seasons. RODERICK JONES too is excellent as *Escamillo*. The whole performance is a wonderful display of team-work, and the orchestra under MICHAEL MUDIE excelled itself.

It is interesting once in a way to hear operas that for one reason or another find no place in the ordinary repertoire. One of these is Sir CHARLES STANFORD's opera founded on *Much Ado About Nothing*, with libretto by JULIAN STURGIS, which was performed by the Oxford University Opera Club

at Oxford Town Hall. The greatest obstacle this enterprising company had to face proved to be the Town Hall itself, which, with magnificent impartiality, roared response to every sound uttered within its heavily-carved walls, with particular emphasis on the orchestra's percussion department. MORTON DEMMERY handled the production with skill and imagination, and derived all the effects he needed from a flight of steps, a balustrade and a bridge, contriving a stage picture that was always colourful and effective. The opera itself, however, promises better on paper than it does in performance—even allowing for the Oxford Town Hall. STANFORD and his librettist have added nothing to Shakespeare. In fact they rather get in the way, and one feels that the near-tragic wooing of *Claudio* and *Hero* and the stormy courtship of *Beatrice* and *Benedick*, not to mention the antics of *Seacole*, *Dogberry* and *Verges*, are better without their amiable intervention.

This is not to say that the whole opera should be consigned for ever to oblivion. It contains dances that are fresh and delightful, some airs of the greatest charm, and a most effective dirge for *Hero*. STANFORD had a great gift for melody and was a master of the orchestra, and the opera reflects the cultivated, scholarly mind of the great musician that he was. The principals of this production, STELLA HICHENS, FIAMETTA OLSCHKI, BRIAN ANDERSON and ROGER TOULMIN acquitted themselves very creditably, under the musical direction of Professor J. A. WESTRUP. D. C. B.





"Charmin' Alpine scene over your bed."

H. J.'s Belles-Lettres

A GODSON of my wife's, Huckleberry Buckle, is a pupil of an experimental school, and this school is trying out how to make everything very adult so that the Great World will not be too much of a shock when met for the first time. As Head of the Journalism Sixth he is editor of the school magazine, *Thumbs Up!* which does not follow any one model, but aims at accustoming its readers to almost any form of periodical, dead nuts against specialization being what the Governors are.

Here is the principal news story:

HEAD DENOUNCES RODENT INFESTATION PROBE FINDINGS

School Vigilance Committee Chairman Smith's boiler-room rat-harboursing claim was vigorously scouted last evening by Albert K. Pardale, rubicund, cigarette-chewing, fortyish Headmaster of Corttingham College. Alleges Pardale Chairman Smith no stranger to rat, queries premises rat-free before search, threatens affair ruthlessly siftworthy. Shock-headed, Bucks born, tram-ticket collecting Smith makes hundred per cent. denial comeback, counters rat no lone boiler-room denizen. Imminent developments not unexpected hereabouts.

The caricatures are rather savage and not such as I should wish to reproduce for my gentle readers, and the Stock Exchange News is now, perhaps, a little *vieux jeu*, but we might have a look at the verse. From a sequence entitled "Pus In Urbe," by A. P. Mogg (aged 11), I extract:

PIMLICO PETE

Throwing his dingo glance from narrow eyes
He trails his seedy fear by broken railings.
His shadow lives for a moment in each dirty
fanlight.

We need not be afraid to hurt his feelings.
Once he marched with Leonidas the Spartan;
But now he cringes from the lifted curtain.

* * * * *

There is, of course, an Oxford Letter:

DEAR CORTTRINGHAMIANS,—It is a real joy that there are now two from the Old School in residence and many a happy tea-hour have we spent together, exchanging reminiscences of days of yore. The senior of our little band is Mark minor (Head's Wife's House 1908-12) who is reading for Pass Mods. on his retirement from political life in the Home Counties. He may frequently be seen going for bus-rides in the vicinity. Our junior member, Spottiswode-Digby (Almacks, Jubilee and Annexe 1934 onwards), is preparing for a career in industry. He is a promising forward and the possessor of no mean baritone. You may rest assured that the honour of our Alma Mater is worthily upheld on the banks of the Isis, so Vale—Vale, dear Corttringhamians.

Your humble servant,
OXONIENSIS.

* * * * *

Skipping a Profile of the Geography Master and a Guide to the Form of the First Fifteen we come to the Book Reviews:

Elementary Algebra to Quadratics. Homer Pole, Senior Mathematics Master, Upling Retained School.

This will never do. Homer Pole may be in a position to impose his dream-child on his unfortunate colleagues and pupils at Upling, but the outside world should steer clear. The problems show little acquaintance with the psychology of modern schoolboys. Exercise 5 gets the rules of marbles completely wrong, and Test Paper II, Question 7, gives aeroplane speeds which are more likely to be those of a helicopter. The answers, which do not show the working, would be quite useless to any class in which work was corrected by the master in person. *Caveat emptor.*

A French Reader for Boys and Girls. Hogg T. Groom, B. ès L.

When Jacques, Fifi and Jean, the family of Monsieur and Madame Chose, are not at school in the town they are spending their holidays on a farm in the country. When they are not spending their holidays on a farm in the country they are at school in the town. The character drawing is adequate to sustain this plot. The great tradition of the French novel seems to have by-passed Hogg T. Groom. Judging from the pictures of Fifi (by Mabelle Pitt) she would have been pretty safe, town or country.

A Matriculation History of England, Part XI: 1856-1880. Baily and Bailey. Fully equipped with date summaries, sketch maps, model answers, lists of useful quotations and copyright forecasts of papers for the next four years.

Any student who committed to memory the six hundred closely-packed pages of this new section of Baily and Bailey would certainly get exemption from University Entrance requirements; but he would be in no condition to take advantage of it. The list of Beautiful Pictures painted during the period is a new service the authors have thought up since Part X. As far as we are concerned they can think it down again. The model answers, while covering Gladstone's being a greater statesman than Disraeli and Disraeli's being a greater statesman than Gladstone, make no provision for those who wish to put them on a par.

* * * * *

The magazine carries quite a bit of advertising, commercial, personal and official. From the back page I cull (a verb I have always wanted to use) the following items.

Jolly Houseparty at Stratford-on-Avon has a few vacancies for February 24-7. Organizing tutor Dr. Maxim Blaum. Accent on youth, ideals and comfort. Discussion group. Picnics.

Shrewd, humorous, cultivated woman wishes to sell portable typewriter, or would exchange for Camera Obscura.

University of Tristan da Cunha: Applications are invited for election to the newly-established Chair of Basque Language and Literature. Candidates who do not already know Basque will be granted leave of absence for study and self-improvement. No testimonials required, but successful candidate will be expected to enter frequently and successfully for the examinations of such bodies as The College of Preceptors. Salary: by arrangement. Canvassing indispensable. Apply in person to Staff Manager (Academic and Administrative) University Site, 37° 6' S., 12° 10' W.

More Musings

TO-DAY I shall muse on that tremendous branch of human activity, the opinion. It is difficult to define an opinion, because everyone knows anyway and would detect the slightest inaccuracy, but if I concentrate on the opinions of others and define them as what others say they think, I have at least established the point that were it not for speech or print most opinions would not get very far in the world. There is of course such a thing as an unspoken opinion, a small but chronic example being humanity's habit of looking its friends' clothes up and down while it talks, thus confirming their fears if not their hopes. There is also humanity's way when out to a meal of glancing at some newly-arrived item of food without interrupting the conversation but not without effect on the home side. I don't mean that this sort of glance is in itself an opinion—it is really only a quick look at the next fifteen minutes of life—but the fact that in the home circle such a glance unaccompanied by some glad word *would* be an opinion gives it a significance it simply hasn't got.

So much for some unspoken opinions. Now for the spoken kind, beginning with those deliberately sought from us. On the whole we all like to be asked for our opinion, but it is not to be denied that ordinary people, that is people not being interviewed by reporters, are less often badgered for their views on civilization or youth than for what they think the correct placing of an extra towel-rail. Still, even this is an opportunity made the most of by people leaning against bathroom-doors and arguing, with a suddenly summoned logical and artistic fervour, for their bathrooms' future.

A rather similar class of sought opinion consists of someone approaching someone else with a shred of cloth intended to become the sitting-room curtains. The rule here is that a negative reaction is an order to go ahead, while an expression of sharp horror has no effect at the time but will be found to result in more shreds of cloth a few days later. I think that this about disposes of the practical domestic opinion; though I might add that, when breakfasters are asked if they notice any difference in their toast, they are being offered a chance to say something encouraging about some imperceptible technical improvement.

Let us now take my readers' views on plays and films; the moment, for example, when one playgoer or filmgoer asks the other's opinion as they shuffle towards the exit. The answer can vary from a telescoped murmur of approval to a brilliant piece of criticism handed out to a

possible radius of three strangers, and human nature finds that it has to sort of dig up its answer reluctantly, though it may work itself up in a matter of seconds to the brilliance I have mentioned. This reluctance may be traced, psychologists think, to the mild straightening-out process undergone by average audiences whose upbringing is all against the mass dramatic mood of an emptying theatre. Going home on a bus, humanity finds itself expanding and telling the people in front exactly what it thought of its evening, while when it gets home there is no stopping it. By now it will have a firmly set opinion on which it can draw for weeks or even years, and it is a tribute to the power of society that so often at parties people can be heard muttering politely in the pauses of some enthusiastic opinion they are known to be clever enough to disagree with. This, of course, goes for more than plays or films; there is a lot of trimming-down in the social interchange of opinion, because by social I mean of course having to be polite, if only fairly.

The interchange, whether social or among people who either know each other well or have been introduced at an intellectual level which cuts out the small-talk (there is a class of person to whom it is difficult to talk about the weather without sounding like someone talking like that), of opinion in general is an enormous subject. I don't propose to do more than make some scattered observations; such as that when people have an opinion they intend to give they become the mental equivalent of a clock between the click and the strike; or that it is very baffling for people who have said what they consider to be the last word on a subject to have it taken so calmly; or that those who knit during a discussion have the technical advantage of being able to stop work to address the room.

I SHALL finish with some definite examples of what some people think and others do not. Patterned wallpaper, Mendelssohn and so on usually lead to disagreement because you get some people swayed by the current fashion, others swayed by what was the current fashion last time they thought about it, others again with an unfair professional equipment, and rugged types who just don't like music or, to a lesser degree and because of the paste, wallpaper. The decline of rice has led to some sharp theoretical opinions on whether it should be a pudding or the stuff round other food, and in any average group there will be more people who like rice-pudding than the others will consider possible. Finally, because I want to get it in somehow, I must mention the opinions you hear in wireless discussions for the surprising way two speakers can express the wildest differences on the deepest questions without one of them winning and the other sulking. **ANDE.**

JAMES THORPE

WE have learned with much regret of the death, in his seventy-third year, of Mr. J. H. Thorpe, who contributed many drawings to this paper between 1909 and 1940. He will be remembered for his faithful renderings of sunlit outdoor scenes and for the clean, economical lines of the cricketers, fishermen, gardeners and other "open-air" characters he loved to portray. He had lived for some years in semi-retirement at his home at Buckfastleigh, but recently contributed two volumes, on Phil May and Edmund J. Sullivan, to the "English Masters of Black-and-White" series.



"There! He's left the wrong milk again."

New and Dreadful

IT was during Housewives' Choice that the voice intruded. "We got none 'ere," it said hoarsely. A pause followed, presumably while the other half of the dialogue replied. Then the voice came on again. Its irritation was evident. "I tell you we ain't got none," it said. "We . . ."

There was a crackle and it was gone. Meanwhile the music continued.

This was my opportunity. I at once telephoned the B.B.C. A woman answered.

"B.B.C.," she said.

"Good morning," I said politely. "I am a listener. A voice has intruded . . ."

"I'll put you through to Inquiries."

"Thank you."

Someone started firing a machine-gun into the telephone. The noise was deafening. My ears sang. Then came

a sudden *click* and a new voice said "B.B.C. Inquiries."

Again it was a woman, but this time the tones were deep and mellow and infinitely soothing.

"B.B.C. Inquiries. Can I help you?"

"Yes," I said. "I wish to inquire about a voice which intruded five minutes ago into Housewives' Choice. It was most disturbing."

The answer came out pat. "It was due to a technical fault at the transmitter. We have since apologized to listeners."

"Thank you," I said. There was a pause.

"Would there be anything further?" the voice cooed.

"No, thank you," I said. "Except—er—that is, have you had many similar complaints?"

"Some fifteen to twenty listeners have telephoned so far."

"And do you expect many more?"

"They will continue on and off during the next half hour."

"And the Press?"

"The Press have also telephoned."

"Thank you very much," I said. And rang off.

It was the work of a moment to dial the number of the *Daily Gazette*. They answered promptly.

"Gazette here," they said.

"Good morning," I said pleasantly.

"I am a reader. I have just been listening to Housewives' Choice and . . ."

"One moment, please," they said. "We will put you through to Reader Research."

Two seconds later a deep, mellow and infinitely soothing voice said "Reader Research."

"I am a reader," I began.

"Oh, yes."

"Ten minutes ago I was listening to Housewives' Choice and . . ."

"You mean the interruption?" the voice asked sweetly.

"Yes," I said.

"We have *already* telephoned the B.B.C."—the voice was throbbing now with quiet pride—"and they tell us that it was due to a technical fault at the transmitter. They have since apologized to listeners."

"Thank you very much," I said.

"Er—tell me," I went on. "Have you had many similar inquiries from your readers?"

"They are coming in steadily. Yours is precisely"—she paused—"precisely the thirty-fourth."

"I expect quite a number always get in touch with you when this sort of thing happens?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," she answered. "A very large number. Always."

"Thank you," I said. And rang off.

The next morning I was waiting for the boy when he delivered my *Gazette*.

There it was on the front page. Hundreds of listeners had telephoned the B.B.C. and the *Gazette's* offices to find out what was the matter. *Hundreds* of listeners . . .

Until yesterday I had never really believed that such people existed. But there they were. It seemed scarcely credible.

I had indeed entered a new and dreadful world.

o o

"Tickets 10s., including supper (strictly limited)."—*Advt. in Yorks. paper.*
Guess by whom.

Free Play for Forty

NOW before I open the playroom door I want to see a nice straight line. Don't push, Michael. Who is standing as straight as a soldier? I can see some lovely tall people. Don't push your stomachs out, children, pull them in!

Now pull your tails in!

Oh, well!

Lead on, Jane. All find chairs. Let me see who is sitting as still as a mouse. Very good, Jimmy, and you too, Mary, and you, dear, yes, you too. All very good. All like mice.

I wonder who wants to play with something quiet to-day?

Hands up for jigsaws.

No one?

Hands up for beads.

No one?

Chalks? Plasticine? Pattern-making?

What? Not one person wants these lovely things?

Well, now, who would like to play on the rocking-horse? Everyone! We shall have to take turns then. Three at a time. Jimmy, Jane and Roger.

The chute? Everyone again. Four can play now and then they must change. Go along, you four.

Open the door for Reggie, quickly, someone.

Not ALL of you. Really!

What is it, Michael? The hammers and pegs? Yes, but outside on the grass so that we don't disturb the class next door. Six NICE people—that's what I'm looking for.

Michael, you may take one outside, Peter, John and those three little girls. Remember, hit PEGS ONLY with the hammer. I can see you through the window, Michael.

Four people may play in the Wendy house. Patricia, Mary and two boys. What, no boys want to play? Elsie and Peggy then. Take some dolls in if you want babies.

Michael! Michael! If I see you do that once more you will have to come in. What a naughty boy! It's no good telling me it SLIPPED against John's head. Look at the bump!

Now the rest of you must choose from the things that are left.

Jigsaws? Beads? Chalks? Pattern-making?

NO ONE?

Oh, the sand-pit, of course.

Six really lovely children—don't hold your breath, dears, you'll burst.

Let me see. Ann, Philip, Tommy, Cecil, Doris and Julia.

What must you remember about sand? That's right. NOT TO THROW IT

AT EACH OTHER! Your mummies don't want sand in your eyes and hair, do they?

The rest come out quietly and fetch what you want.

QUIETLY! My goodness, what a noise!

Sit down again. Hands on heads. Up. On heads. Up again. Hands away. Now, can you hear the clock ticking?

You won't hear it if you keep scrabbling your feet like that, John Todd.

All right. Now come quietly.

What on earth is the matter, Mary? Do you feel ill?

Do you want a drink?

Do you want to go outside?

Do you want something different to play with?

Well, what is it then?

Have you got a hanky? Fetch her a paper one from the cupboard, John.

Now tell me.

I said you would BURST? When? Really, Mary, what a silly little girl. Only if you held your breath, I said.

You did? Well, you haven't burst, have you, so stop crying. Run along and make something nice with your plasticine and no more nonsense.

ANYTHING, dear. Worms, marbles, buttons, crumpets—here's a match-stick to make the holes.

Michael! Inside! In the corner! The very idea! If John's mother comes to school to-morrow I hope you will explain how he got those two bumps.

Everyone, hands away. Ready for changing.

Pegs change with plasticine, beads with chute, jigsaws with rocking-horse, patterns with sand-pit, chalks with Wendy house.

You haven't anything to do? Who else?

You five may have the brick box.

Is that the bell for playtime?

Thank heavens—I mean good heavens, children, we must hurry.

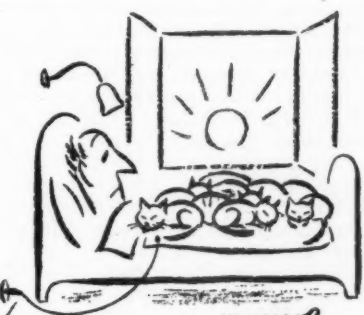
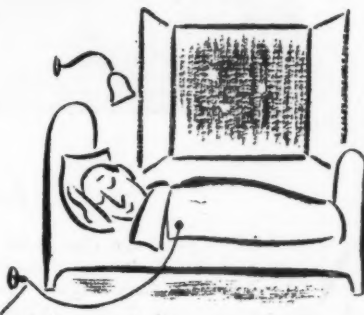
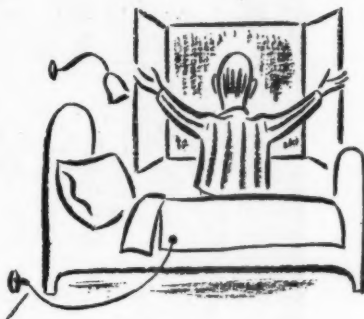
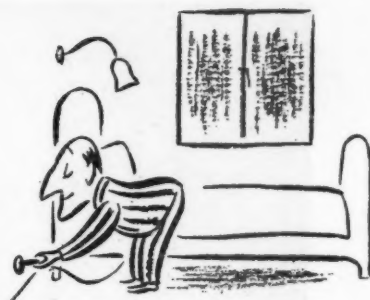
Pack up quickly. I'm looking for some really nice children—straight backs, no fidgets.

No, not you, Michael, what next! We're all ashamed of Michael, aren't we?

Jimmy, John, Pat and Elsie. The rest lead out to play quietly.

QUIETLY, I said.

Peter, go up to the staff-room and ask Miss Judd if she would very kindly send my tea down here to-day, and two aspirins from the first-aid box.



JW TANOR



La Belle Dame Sans Merci

NEARLY a year ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer raised the duty on tobacco by 3s. 4d. a lb., and so pushed up the retail price of "standard" cigarettes from 3s. 4d. for twenty to 3s. 6d. It is my firm belief that this will prove to be the last increment in the present half-century. The summit of our misfortunes has been reached, I think, and we may now expect the path of duty to follow a gentle gradient down to the meadows of sweet reasonableness. If my assumptions are correct (and I know nothing, I swear it, of what is in the Chancellor's mind) this is an ideal moment to light up, puff slowly and contentedly, and contemplate our past achievements as taxpayers.

We have done fairly well. Since 1888 when the first "Wild Woodbine" cigarettes were introduced (at five a penny) we have coughed up something like £5,000,000,000 in tobacco duty—a

figure which looks even more impressive when compared with the following:

Gold Reserve of the United States, £6,000 millions (approx.).

Total amount borrowed by British Government (1914-18), £7,180 millions.

Total of private incomes (before tax) in Britain (1938), £5,107 millions.

U.K. Exports of home-produced jute goods (1946), £1,944 thousands.

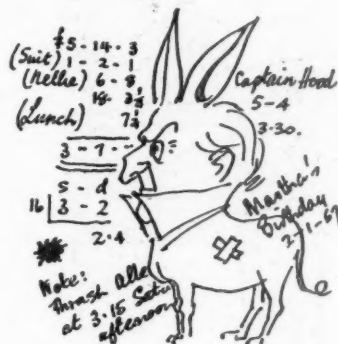
Now let me strike a more personal note. In 1863, when the Exchequer took it into its head to ruin my family, the standard rate of duty was 3s. 2d. a lb. My grandfather was a sensible man, very careful in his financial dealings and a devout upholder of the merits of solvency. In 1864 he decided that an occasional pipe would do him no harm and might even impress his business colleagues, but before taking the first fatal step towards the tobacconist's he wrote to the Queen and asked for an

assurance that the duty would never be increased. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that he would be delighted to welcome my grandfather as a contributor to revenue account and that although he could not promise anything, he, personally, thought an increase in tobacco duty extremely unlikely. My grandfather then decided to smoke.

The Exchequer made no move for fourteen years. Then, in 1878, it suddenly raised the duty by fourpence a lb. My grandfather protested vehemently, stopped smoking, started again, spent a small fortune answering the advertisements of people who guaranteed to cure him of the tobacco habit, and reduced the entire house to a state of misery. But the drug beat him in the end.

Much against my grandfather's will my father started smoking in the year 1901, when the duty stood at 3s. 0d.

My grandfather was convinced that the rate had been lowered for no other purpose than to trap his son and the new generation he represented into becoming the slaves of the winsome weed. He died in 1909, mercifully only a few months before the rate was bumped up to the staggering figure of 3s. 8d. My father didn't try to stop smoking, but he lectured me at length about its perils and implored me never



Extract from the Commonplace Book illustrating my grandfather's attitude to Mr. Gladstone.

to trust a Chancellor. With characteristic fortitude I managed to avoid the narcotic entirely right through my early schooldays.

Then, in 1918, I took my first whiff. It seemed to me that at 8s. 2d. the rate had reached its apogee. I read long treatises by learned economists who called tobacco "an elastic commodity" and maintained that any further tax on the commodity would cause such a shrinkage of demand that total revenue would fall. They argued, too, that no Chancellor would be fool enough to risk a clash with political economy. My father's view was that the duty might remain unchanged for a number of years, but only to lure me and my generation into a position of false security. He was absolutely right. In 1931 the duty rocketed to 8s. 10d.; then in 1939 to 13s. 6d., in 1940 to 19s. 6d., in 1947 to 54s. 10d., in 1948 to 58s. 2d. . . .

But there'll be no more of this. We're there, at the top.

If you ask me how I come to have all these figures at my finger-tips I shall refer you to the fly-leaves of my copy of *Doctor Argyle's Herbal Remedies*, which has served the family as a log and commonplace book for more than eighty years. Some of the tables, begun by my grandfather and kept

up-to-date by his son and grandson, make interesting reading:

WILLS'S "WILD WOODBINE" CIGARETTES

Year	Price
1888	5 a penny
1915	5 for 1½d.
1918	5 for 1½d.

(Note by my father: "After this date the farthing lost status rapidly and was never again used in retail tobacco transactions.")

1920	10 for 4d.
1939	10 for 4½d.

(Note in my own hand: "From to-day I become a non-smoker.")

1940	10 for 6d.
1942	10 for 9d.
1947	10 for 1s. 3d.

(Note by me: "The world has gone mad." "World" was subsequently crossed out and replaced by "Dalton.")

1948	10 for 1s. 3½d.
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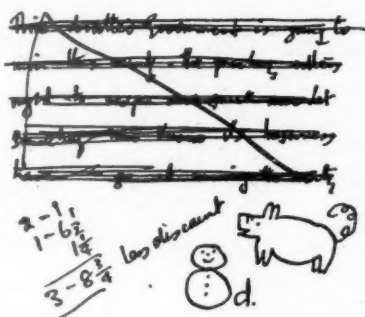
PLAYER'S "MEDIUM NAVY CUT" CIGARETTES

1900	10 for 2½d.
1909	10 for 3d.
1915	10 for 4d.
1917 (May)	10 for 5d.
1917 (June)	10 for 4½d.

(Note by my father: "I cannot believe it! Prices can't go down in war-time!")

1918 (April)	10 for 5½d.
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(Note by my father: "A black day at home and on the Western Front.")



Extract showing my father's state of mind in 1918.

1920	10 for 6d.
1939	10 for 7d.
1942	10 for 1s. 0d.
1947	10 for 1s. 8d.

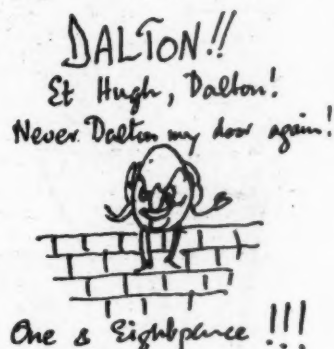
(Note by me: "One and eight-pence!!!")

1948	10 for 1s. 9d.
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There are sketches, too, which I have

thought fit to reproduce here in spite of their crudeness.

Statistics seem to run in the family, so it is not surprising to find that my grandfather's entry for 1889—"In the park this forenoon I counted three individuals smoking paper cigars with apparent enjoyment"—should be followed by my father's analysis of the tobacco utilization position in 1906:



Extract showing my own instability in 1947.

"Careful observation in the streets, hackneys, etc., has convinced me that cigarettes are gaining rapidly in popularity at the expense of pipes and cigars. At a rough guess, I should say that of the tobacco used in this country:

67.9 per cent. is consumed in pipes,
26.5 per cent. in cigarettes,
4.2 per cent. as cigars, and
1.4 per cent. as snuff."

Imagine my surprise on discovering that the Census of Production for the following year (1907) supported my father's calculations down to the decimal point! I am afraid that I have rather let this matter slide since 1936 when I calculated that the corresponding items would be:

25.8 per cent. consumed in pipes,
73.1 per cent. in cigarettes,
0.6 per cent. as cigars, and
0.5 per cent. as snuff

—figures which I subsequently compared with the Census returns for 1935 and found accurate in every detail.

The family's gross expenditure on tobacco in the period covered by the inquiry works out at about £1,250, of which £1,100 represents tax. If any other family in the country feels that its record will hold a candle to this I shall be pleased to compare notes. Meanwhile I await the Budget with quiet confidence.

Hod.



"For heaven's sake, don't worry about it. On our present rations you're SUPPOSED to feel sluggish."

Blind Man Reading

WITH the six-warded
key of Braille
I have unlocked the door
of darkness
which imprisoned me:
I was afraid—
now I am free
as I was never free before.

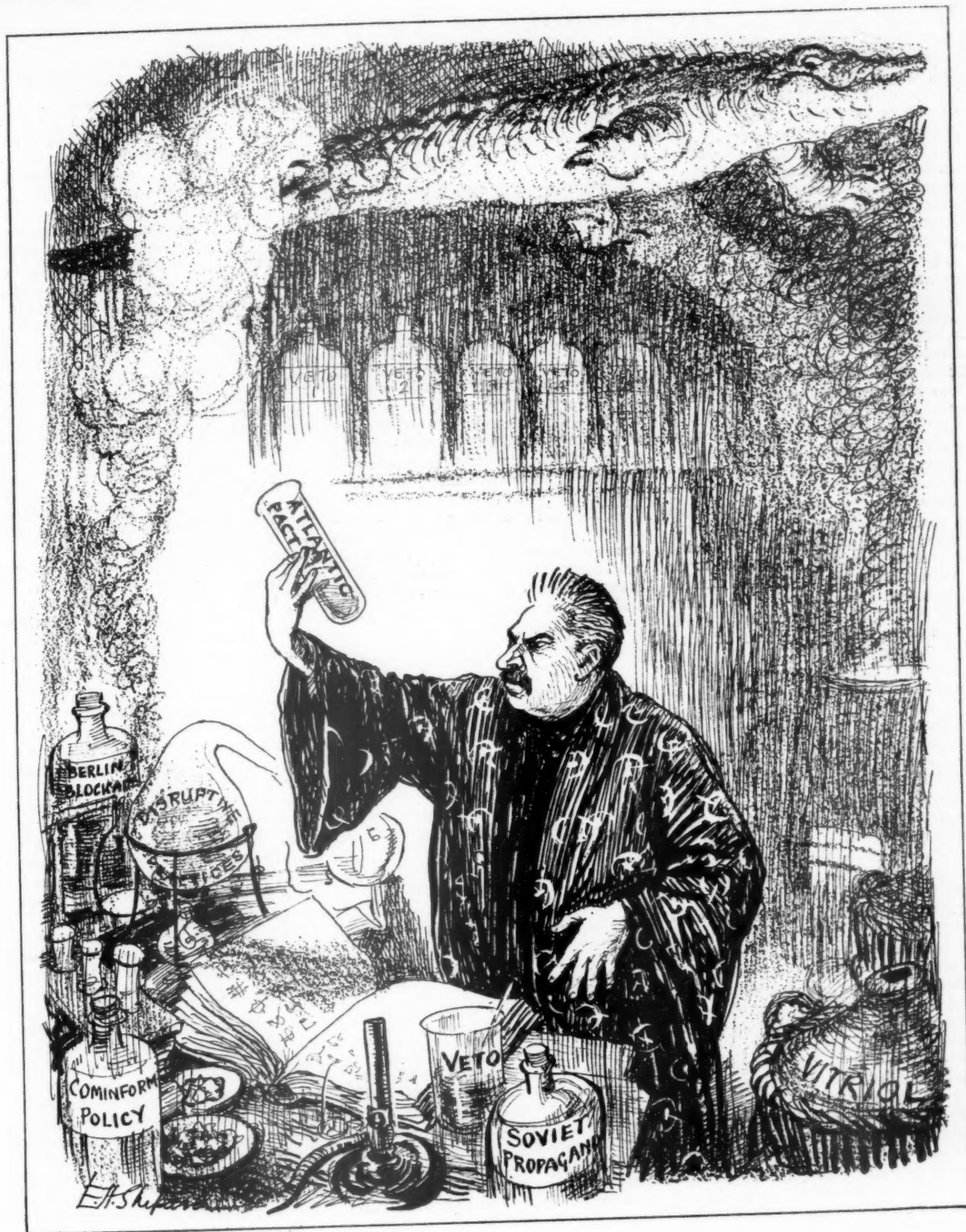
More clearly than
with my lost sight
I see through my ten fingertips—
ah! with what undisturbed delight!—
the dolphined waves,
the sea-slapped ships.

Now words I spell
by touch alone
with double magic
bind their spell:
these six dots tangible, have taught
the meaning of intangible.

Silver is not a colour now,
but silveriness
the transient gleam,
the weight, the coldness, the smooth feel,
the minnow-flicker in the stream.

Each colour is its own brave hue,
and every shape it clothes as well:
as purple is an emperor's cloak,
a cumulus cloud,
the nightshade's bell.

All, all the colours known to light
have this new richness,
saving black
which, through my hands, has given
me sight
but will not give me back
what I most crave
behind my blindness' bars:
sight of the real night
studded with real stars. R. C. S.



THE RED ALCHEMIST

MONDAY, February 21st.—Quite the most eloquent speech made in the House of Commons to-day (and, truth to tell, there was no great competition) came from two small boys in the public gallery. When Mr. JOHN STRACHEY, the Minister of Food, made an announcement about the de-rationing of sweets—and when this had been translated by a parent from the original officialese—the two boys said, as one, and with a sort of delighted awe: “Ooooooh!”

That was all, but it would have delighted that staunch family man, Mr. STRACHEY, had it been loud enough to reach him. There was a roar of cheers from all parts of the House when this announcement was made. It was also announced that there is to be a “bonus” of seven pounds of sugar on each ration book, for the purposes of jam-making, or any other use the ingenious housewife can devise.

However often the cynics remarked on the proximity of a critical by-election in Hammersmith, or made witty remarks about the use of sugar to manufacture the “sweets of office,” your scribe felt that the breathless little comment of those two small voters-to-be really expressed all that needed to be said.

Whatever the sweets may do to our digestions in due time, Ministers evidently believe that hope deferred will not have the proverbial consequences, for the restoration will not come into effect until April 24th.

The day's main discussion was on milk—its division into various categories of purity and excellence. Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL, brought forward the Bill to enforce this, and she spoke so eloquently that before anybody could take a deep breath the Second Reading was approved. And then a few odds and ends were whirled through, and by seven in the evening the sitting was ended.

Everybody was pleased, except those Members who had planned to raise subjects on the motion for the adjournment, which could have gone on until 10.20. But as they appeared to have adjourned a little too early, they missed the knock of opportunity.

Members had had a little domestic cheer of their own (to the great puzzlement of the public galleries) when, skilfully piloted by Mr. Speaker, they “achieved,” as Whitehall would have it, one hundred and eight questions in the Question-hour.

Swiftly pointing the moral, while the House was still pleased with itself,

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, February 21st.—House of Commons: A Sweet Announcement.

Tuesday, February 22nd.—House of Commons: New Arrival.

Wednesday, February 23rd.—House of Lords: The Lord Chancellor Makes an Announcement.

House of Commons: Courts Martial Under Review.

Thursday, February 24th.—House of Commons: Mr. Speaker Makes an Announcement.

Mr. Speaker suggested that this kind of thing could be done daily if only “Supplementaries” could be kept down. “Ask yourselves,” he suggested, “Is my supplementary really necessary?”

Judging by the jet-propelled speed with which questions were dealt with, the answer appeared in most cases to be in the negative. And would it be a breach of Parliamentary privilege or something to assume, from the brevity of the sitting, that the same principle may apply to some of the *speeches*?

TUESDAY, February 22nd.—A certain feeling of anti-climax was observable to-day. The triumph of yesterday was not repeated. The question-record fell by nearly thirty and Mr. Speaker sighed resignedly.



Impressions of Parliamentarians

74. The Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot
(Scottish Universities)

Tuesdays are sometimes quite exciting, since by then all Members (or nearly all) have returned to their duties. And to-day there was an air of excitement as Question-time neared its end. The Government benches filled up, and everybody seemed to be looking at the cross-bench, below the Bar, where Miss ALICE BACON and Mr. COLLINDRIDGE—both fra' Yorkshire—sat, with a stranger between them. The stranger turned out to be Dr. BROUGHTON, who

had won the Batley and Morley by-election, retaining the seat for the Government. A hard-earned win from the Opposition could not have aroused more enthusiasm among the Government's beaming forces.

At the call of Mr. Speaker Miss BACON lined up her squad with martial precision at the Bar and together they

strode sturdily but withal gracefully up the floor, bowing three times en route. Miss BACON and Mr. COLLINDRIDGE safely delivered the Doctor into the care of Mr. EDWARD FELLOWES, acting-Clerk of the House, and the roar of cheers rose higher as the oath was taken, the Membership Book signed.

It is so very rarely that a woman Member acts as sponsor that your scribe offers a few fashion notes. Miss BACON was in grey, with a necklace of pink beads (understood to have positively no political significance), and she carried a black leather handbag, together with the broadest smile seen on the floor for a long time.

The little ceremony was by far the most interesting event of the day, for soon after Questions most people went off to other duties, leaving those enthusiasts who remained to talk about the misdeeds of the nationalized railways. And it was not at all inspiring.

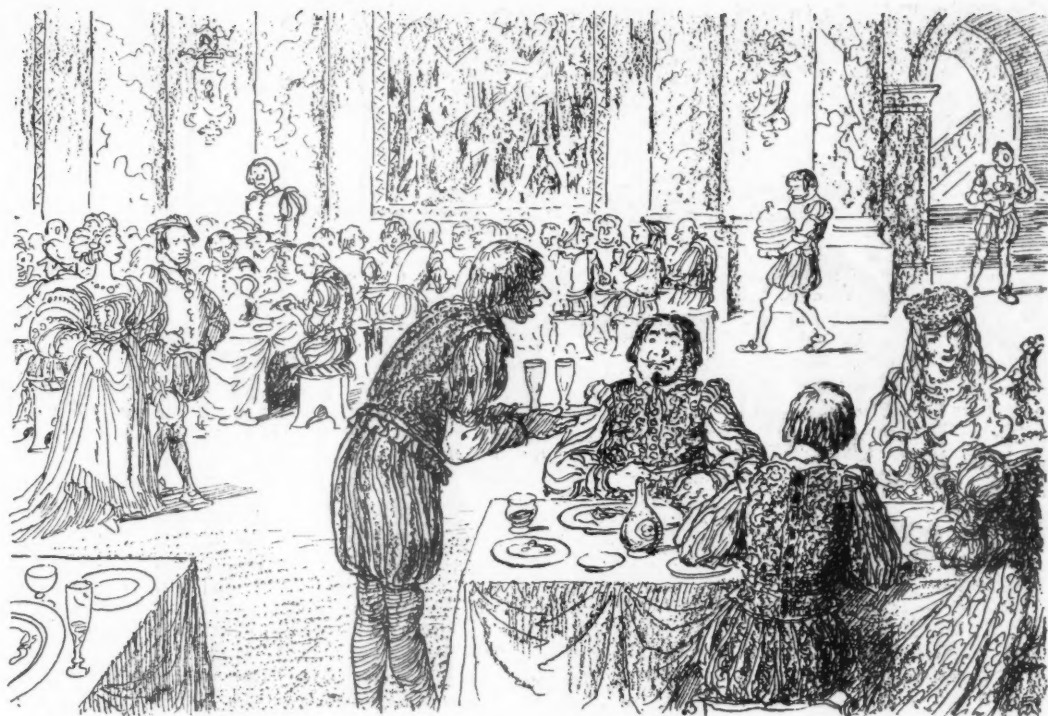
WEDNESDAY, February 23rd.—

When it was announced that more Scotch whisky is to be distilled, there was an enthusiastic cheer from most parts of the House of Commons. But then Dr. SUMMERSKILL added that *all* of it would go for export—and the cheer took on a dutiful, wistful note. The allocation of barley for the manufacture of this golden, dollar-earning fluid is to go up to 300,000 tons, or 25,000 more than at present.

Mr. “JIMMIE” HUDSON, that ever-watchful leader of the total abstainers, happened, for once, not to be present, so the question and answer passed with but little hostile notice.

Mr. WILFRED PALING, the Postmaster-General, announced that there is to be a special issue of stamps next month to commemorate the seventy-fifth birthday of the ambitiously-named “Universal Postal Union,” which apparently acts as a sort of United Nations of the postal world.

At the end of the Question-hour Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, the Minister of Defence, made a statement about courts martial. He said that the report of the special committee under Mr. Justice Lewis on reforms in courts martial and general legal procedure in



"Donna Lucrezia wishes to make a small wager that the illustrious Signor cannot tell arsenic from strychnine."

the Armed Forces was under consideration, but that no swift decisions could be made because that Committee had not been asked to report on procedure in the Royal Navy, which differed from that in the other two Services.

Members, on both sides of the House, asked, a little surprisedly, why it was necessary to hold up reforms in the Army and the Royal Air Force because similar steps were not yet prepared in the Navy. It was not very clear what was the answer to this, and, after a good deal of spirited cross-fire, notice was given that the matter would be raised on the adjournment motion "as soon as possible." (See below.)

The House of Lords heard with regret a statement by popular Lord JOWITT, the Lord Chancellor, that because of trouble with an eye, he had had to ask leave of absence from the Woolsack for a period of rest. Leave had been given by The King, and Peers on all sides of the House offered their sympathy and good wishes. The Lord Chancellor is so good-humouredly versatile and well-informed on all sorts of out-of-the-way things that the

Opposition, as well as the Government Front Bench, will miss him.

But his Lordship, who has more than once endeared himself to the House by his knowledge (and use) of contemporary slang, gave his colleagues a glance which clearly said: "I'll be seeing you!"

Then the House passed on to a learned discussion on naval construction, during which those least-limelighted of men, the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors, received highly honourable mention—and a promise of more pay.

The majority of the most militant Members on both sides of the Commons were in South Hammersmith, for eve-of-poll meetings in the important bye-election there. Which probably accounted for a strange omission from the normal formula of the debate. It was on pests, and the Minister, moving a Bill for their more effective suppression, said they destroyed a tenth of the world's production of cereals, including (in 1947) 33,000,000 tons of bread grains. This is equal to four years' rations for the people of the U.K.

By an unaccountable oversight, not one speaker on the Government side attributed this to Tory misrule. This, however, is undoubtedly explained by the exodus to South Hammersmith.

On the adjournment, the court-martial question was raised again, and Mr. ALEXANDER and some of his back-bench supporters had a few words. But, it would seem, the Government's decision stands.

THURSDAY, February 24th.—A lot of time was spent in a question-and-answer discussion between Mr. Speaker and Members on both sides, on the question whether the rights of Members to raise matters on the adjournment motion should be in any way modified. After a complicated series of exchanges, Mr. Speaker made it plain that he wanted no modification of an age-old privilege.

"IMPROVING LOT OF OUT-PATIENTS"
Heading in "Daily Telegraph."

Ah—mighty queer lot they used to be.



"If it's six-and-seven-eighths, I'll take it."

The Cosmic Mess

THIS column was about to chide the solemn gentlemen who announce musical works on the air, and talk about "Opus 29", with a long O, as if it rhymed with "soap/us". The "o" is short. "You don't talk about Grand Oopera, do you?" this column was going to say sincerely. But it remembered in time that though it pronounces the "o" in "onerous" short, which is correct, it always talks about the "oanus of proof"; and not, as it should, perhaps, the "onnu of proof". Life is difficult for those who have learned some Latin and have a conscience. In "bonus", "modus operandi" and "locum tenens" the "o", if this column remembers rightly, is short. But who talks of "bonnus shares" or "loccus standi"? There, however, we are at least consistent. We do not say "loccus" one

minute and "loacus" the next. So perhaps this column was right after all, and it should be "Oppus 29" and "the onnu of proof".

* * * * *
The "Chiltern Hundreds" are so often in the news (to say nothing of Mr. Home's delightful play) that the citizen knows surprisingly little about them. Even the many Members of Parliament who, for all they know now, may one day desire, or be obliged, to leave Parliament, will probably have to run to their Whips and say "I want the Chiltern Hundreds. But how do I get them? To whom, for example, do I apply?" The answer to that, according to Erskine May, is "The office of steward of the Chiltern Hundreds is an appointment under the hand and seal of the Chancellor of Exchequer". So perhaps you write to Sir Stafford

Cripps, or perhaps you write to the Prime Minister as First Lord of the Treasury, and ask him to put in a good word for you with the Chancellor.

Even then, of course, the poor foreigners will remain a little bewildered. "If a man", they say, "wish to go out of Parliament—why not? And, if he wish to go out of public life, why must he begin by taking job under Government?" But you and I, who do not expect all our arrangements to make sense, will not be worried by such foolish questions. You know, perhaps, that "it is a settled principle of Parliamentary law that a member, after he is duly chosen, cannot relinquish his seat". He has made his seat, so to speak, and he must lie on it. After all, he has been summoned by the King: and, like the inmates of Broadmoor, he is detained during the King's

pleasure. In 1775, says dear old E. M., Mr. George Grenville moved for a Bill to enable Members to vacate their seats: but, evidently, nothing happened.

On the other hand, as of course you know, the Succession to the Crown Act, 1707, laid down that if any member "shall accept of any office of profit from the Crown during such time as he shall continue to be a member, his election shall be and is hereby declared to be void, and a new writ shall issue for a new election, as if such person, so accepting, was naturally dead". A striking illustration, some will think, of the common theory that to be a Minister of the Crown is worse than death. But the rule was soundly based, this column understands. There might be jobbery or nepotism about: and when the Government gave you a paid job you had to go back to the electors and ask them to ratify your "rise".

Now, perhaps, even the poor foreigner will begin to understand why a man who wants to escape from the House of Commons "applies for the Chiltern Hundreds"—or, in full, "for the office of steward or bailiff of His Majesty's three Chiltern Hundreds of Stoke, Desborough, and Burnham". (The practice began, it seems, about 1750.)

But there are still a few puzzling points. For one thing, with the best will in the world, you may not *get* the Chiltern Hundreds. You may be fobbed off, for example, with the office of steward of the Manor of Northstead. In the old days it might have been the office of escheator of Munster: but that was abolished in 1938. Or they could have made you steward of the manors of East Hendred and Hempholme: but these have not been used since 1840 and 1865.

Now, the question arises (though it is fair to say that it has never yet arisen except in this column): "What happens if you apply for the Chiltern Hundreds and they give you the Manor of Northstead, or the escheatorship of Munster?" You say "Many thanks, dear Chancellor. But I asked for the Chilterns, not Northstead Manor. I like the Chilterns, I like the scenery and the air. I have always been fond of Stoke, Desborough, and Burnham. The Manor of Northstead means nothing to me. No one has ever applied for the Manor of Northstead. If I can't have the Chilterns, I don't want anything. I shall change my mind and retain my seat." That seems fair enough.

And, of course, they may refuse to give you either. In 1775 a Mr. Bayly

desired to resign his seat and stand for Abingdon, against a Ministerial candidate. But Lord North refused to give him the Chilterns, Northstead or even East Hendred or Hempholme. "I have made it my constant rule", he said, "to resist every application of that kind when any gentleman entitled to my friendship would have been prejudiced by my compliance." So, if Mr. Churchill, say, asked for the Chiltern Hundreds in order to stand at Sowerby, say, he might not get them. Which, when you come to think of it, is pretty reasonable: for otherwise he could stride from by-election to by-election, winning them all. Presumably, too, if a Member was very popular, the Prime Minister, urged by the House, might refuse to let him resign.

"The office is retained until the appointment is revoked to make way for the appointment of another holder thereof." That disposes of another of this column's happy fancies, which was "What would happen if the stewards of the Chilterns and the Manor of Northstead both obstinately refused to resign, thus blocking all exits from the House of Commons?" The answer is "They couldn't." A pity.

Another thing that may daze the foreigner a bit, after all this talk, is that no profit in fact attaches to these "offices of profit". These offices are merely nominal: but as the warrants of appointment grant them "together with all wages, fees, allowances", etc., "they assume the form of places of profit". All words, however, which formerly attached honour to the appointment, are now omitted, in order to remove any scandal in granting these offices to persons unworthy of the favour of the Crown, who may desire to vacate their seats in Parliament. The words "reposing especial trust in the care and fidelity of", etc., were first omitted in the year 1861.

That suggests a practical amendment, to this fascinating column, at least. Surely there should be two, or three, scales of "offices of profit". The Chiltern Hundreds, say, should be reserved for those who go out in honour and glory, because of old age or sickness, or to serve the State elsewhere. Here the "words of honour" would be restored: and there might, as well, be some pretty token of "profit", a butt of Malmsey or two, or a silver cigar-box, with a complimentary inscription. This would show a man's children that he had served, and served with credit, in the British Parliament (at present, in most cases, he has less to show than an actor). It would be a nice custom too for the

new steward to drive down, or up, to the Chilterns in a coach-and-four, to see how the Chilterns are doing, and make a farewell speech. The Chiltern Oration might become an institution: and, apart from that, there is no evidence that the Steward ever gives a moment's attention to his Hundreds, or they to him.

The Manor of Northstead, on the other hand, would be reserved for those who go out under a cloud. Here, as now, there would be no "words of honour", and no silver box. Those who live in the Manor of Northstead, wherever that may be, might resent being singled out in this manner: but one can't please everybody.

What do you think about all this? Say, at least, that you care.

* * * * *

This column is glad to report a satisfactory settlement in the case of *House of Commons (Kitchen Committee) v. Haddock*, reported in an adjacent column two weeks ago. The egg in question was duly presented at Mr. Haddock's bank, and met. A. P. H.

Hill Fox

LIGHTLY like a feather
through the high hill-
heather
weathering from windward,
hindward mocks
He, the rover, raider,
deft-foot fox;
fanged free-trader,
plunderer—invader
harried from the vineyard,
snarling Goth—
flurried from the pen-yard,
night's dun
moth:
scenting down the hill-side,
scanning at the rill's side,
yapping in the moon's way
(there's noon-ray none);
He, the swift corsair,
sorcerer slinking,
green-gleam winking
galliard on the rocks;
lichen's lizard;
brushwood's wizard;
devil-vizard;
Fox.

o o

"You see, after the Head had glanced at the sheet of paper, he screwed up his face and flung the thing into the wastepaper basket. I wondered very much why he didn't keep it."—*Story in weekly paper.*
Just sick of having to wash it, perhaps.



"There was one good point about the book—I didn't have to queue to read it."

The Mallendyne Case

(With a bow to Mr. Hitchcock)

I SUPPOSE every barrister cherishes a sentimental recollection of his first brief; but it can have happened to few, as it did to me, that the first case in which they appeared has turned out as sensational as anything ever heard before the courts. Mine was indeed more like a chapter from a sensational novel, and for that matter has been, quite often; two or three chapters, in fact.

When I had crammed myself with all the law and all the food necessary to ensure a call to the Bar, I went to the Sessions in some anxiety to know what fortune the gods, or whoever was the

responsible authority, would throw my way. I found the Old Bailey, to begin with, somewhat bigger than I had always imagined it, and certainly very much harder to find my way around; but after an embarrassing period of wandering along corridors, pushing at locked doors and smiling affably at policemen, I found myself in court at last. There I joined a row of barristers, several of whom looked as young and embarrassed as myself. They sat toying with their papers and trying to appear confident and prosperous; but as I had forgotten to bring any papers with me I had to content myself with

taking my glasses off and putting them back and making occasional notes on my cuff. (I received, I remember, a rude note from the laundryman the following week; he accused me of being unsound on torts.) "After all," I whispered to my neighbour, "a dock brief often contains much that is interesting and instructive"; only unfortunately I said "brief-case" in mistake for "dock brief," and he replied with some inane remark about just having enough room for his pyjamas and tooth-brush for week-ends.

The first prisoner was already in the dock. She was, I need hardly say, the most beautiful creature I have ever seen. From the top of her spun-gold hair to the soles of her dainty feet—I only saw those later, of course—she was the perfect type of young womanhood, and though she wore now an expression of utter helplessness and dejection, it was not difficult to imagine how that elfin face would light up when her rosebud lips broke into a smile at the approach of someone she loved. She was at this moment being invited to choose herself a defence counsel from among those present in court.

So touched was I at seeing this poor wail at the mercy of the unfeeling processes of English justice that I stood up in my place: "My lord," I began, "I cannot stand idly by—"

The young barrister next to me pulled me down again by my gown, and the judge looked at me over his spectacles.

"The prisoner," he said mildly, "will choose her own counsel, Mr. Er."

Of course she chose me. There was some feeling among the other barristers in court; they resented, only naturally, such a rapid rise to success by one so recently received into their ranks. "Faint heart never won," I murmured, as I left the court for a conference with my fair client.

I shall never forget that conference. My client was Amanda Mallendyne, the twenty-year-old Latvian-born wife of Admiral Mallendyne, a retired naval officer who, in a vast rambling thirteenth-century mansion on the Yorkshire moors, devoted himself to the breeding of tortoises, until one day he was found dead by his faithful old manservant Collins. He had been poisoned by an overdose of cyanide; and Amanda was accused of his murder.

I will not weary the reader with details of what passed at that momentous meeting. We went through all the evidence with a fine-tooth comb, and some of it with a stiff brush as well, but at the end of it there was still a formidable case against us. Amanda had been known to buy cyanide "to poison a

rabbit"; she had taken to her husband the cup of cocoa in which the cyanide had been found; she had been heard by the servants to call him a "hateful old thing," and threaten his life; she was to receive three million pounds under the terms of his will. The case was damning, and at the end of the day I was tempted to ask Amanda if she would not be willing to throw up the whole thing and come away with me to some quiet spot where we could live the rest of our lives together secure from worry and persecution.

At last the fatal day arrived when Amanda was to stand up in court and defend her honour and her life against the accusations made by society. How proud of her I felt as she stood there, the cynosure of all eyes, the handsomest woman in the dock!

It was obvious from the beginning that the prosecuting counsel was hopelessly prejudiced. He twisted every piece of evidence to show Amanda in the worst light; he brought up matters that no gentleman would permit himself to discuss when dealing with a lady; he constantly appealed to the judge to disallow the questions, however trivial and irrelevant, which I put to his witnesses in cross-examination. By the time the prosecution's case was complete I was boiling with indignation; and it was then that the plan came to me by which I knew I must save my beloved.

Save my beloved! And I had another long and rapturous conference, during which I persuaded the wardress to remain outside. "Whatever happens, my darling," I told the lovely prisoner, "you must not be surprised. By the end of to-day's proceedings you will be a free woman."

The court reassembled, and the vast crowd—for the case had become a *cause célèbre*—hung breathless to hear what line I should take in my defence. As I toyed with my papers, put my spectacles on and took them off, bit my nails and adjusted the angle of my wig, I knew that every man and woman in that court was hanging on my words. Very well, I said to myself, to-day I shall write a new page in English criminal justice.

Slowly I rose to my feet. You could have heard a pin drop.

And I ignored the piteous figure in the dock and prosecuted the prosecuting counsel instead.

All the hate that I had accumulated for his detestable character during the hearing of the case for the prosecution flared up inside me. I flayed him. I spared no one. I even implicated the judge. It was inevitable that the jury should stop the case.

There was a round of cheers—quickly quelled by the judge, who sat, pale and trembling, not knowing from which side I should strike next—as the foreman of the jury rose in his seat. "We've 'eard enough, me lord," he said.

"So have I," said the judge faintly. The court was adjourned, and while Amanda was led radiant back to her cell, I left the court the hero of the hour.

That was my first case. I have never accepted another brief from that day to this.

As to the lovely Amanda, and the hateful barrister who had so deeply etched his name with letters of corrosive acid on my mind, need I relate to you what ultimately befell them?

I should think probably I need not.

Flight After a Cataclysm

SNOW fell one summer's day,
The furnace froze;
I heard the mountains sneeze,
And in dismay
Put out my hand . . . to seize
A pishogue's nose.

In terror as I lay
I thought of crows,
And how they feed on bees
And toasted hay;
Slowly and by degrees
I then arose.

Dressing myself in grey
I grasped my toes,
Rubb'd butter on my knees
And flew away
Towards those lonely seas
That no man knows.



"Would everybody kindly pay attention and note that I am about to purchase a paper by putting down a sixpenny piece and taking five pennies change?"

At the Play

The Foolish Gentlewoman (DUCHESS)—*The Compelled People* (NEW LINDSEY)
Sweethearts and Wives (WYNDHAM'S)

IF you were a girl of nineteen, and imagined yourself in love with a handsome Mr. MacGregor, and were half expecting him to send a letter of proposal—the date being 1913—then

is squeezed out of her. And she had been in love with Mr. MacGregor. And Mr. MacGregor, a shy and backward type, had never been heard of again.

That might have been that, but



G.S. 449
 [The Foolish Gentlewoman]

GUEST GIVING HERSELF A HEARTY WELCOME

Simon Brocken	SIR LEWIS CASSON
Tilly Cuff	MISS MARY MERRALL
Isabel Brocken	DAME SYBIL THORNDIKE

I don't think it unreasonable to suggest that, finding the letter addressed to a plain and insignificant relation, you might open it in a moment of panic and persuade yourself that to say nothing about so cruel a jest would be kindest to its victim. You could easily soothe your conscience with the thought that, even if Mr. MacGregor meant it, he could, if he were a man of any spirit, fire a second shot; and after this shabby but human performance you could then develop into a perfectly upright pillar of society. Such was the case of the woolly-minded but irresistible Isabel Brocken, in *The Foolish Gentlewoman* at the Duchess, a what-would-you-do-chum inquiry on a fairly light, domestic level. Having thus done down her orphan cousin, Isabel, whose head is an efficient colander, forgets about it, marries, and is comfortably widowed; but poor Tilly Cuff walks the lapdogs of the rich debilitated from one Grand Hotel to another until nearly all the life

party and with Isabel's attempts, baffled by her outraged solicitor, to put things right. Awkward to the last, Tilly turns down the money and begs, in an agony of self-abasement which is somehow more embarrassing than moving and is slightly an anti-climax, to come and live with Isabel; and Isabel, explaining to her horrified guests that perhaps her generation took the ties of blood more seriously, accepts this frightful proposition as lightly as if it were an invitation to the pictures. I thought the ending a little too contrived to be quite convincing, though with Dame SYBIL THORNDIKE in charge it comes very near to being so; and with this reservation, and a rider that the play is somewhat slow in getting to its feet, it can be commended for its shrewd domestic observation, for its understanding of the Tillys of the world, for some delightful twists of character and some capital acting.

Isabel, burbling, childishly single-minded, entirely lovable, is a part

apparently hand-made for Dame SYBIL. No one else could bring so much sweet sanity out of so much muddled thinking. It is a triumph of beautifully controlled dithering. Sir LEWIS CASSON, obliged as the solicitor to be a bear struggling testily with the dictates of a kind heart, growls with a most winning ferocity. And Miss MARY MERRALL, sparing herself nothing as she paints in with bitter strokes the jaundice of poverty and loneliness, gives a performance which will stick a long time in the memory. Miss ISABEL DEAN and Mr. NIGEL GREEN pleasantly present the angle of youth, and, in a queerly effective way very difficult to describe, Miss MONA WASHBOURNE and Miss ELEANORE BRYAN strike an original note as the Cockney help and her small daughter. Simpletons both, on the run from an intolerable life with father, their crashing naivety has a dramatic boldness on which Miss SHARP is to be congratulated. The quite long scenes in which the preposterous child melts the crabbed attorney might easily have failed dismally, but they don't.

Mr. MICHAEL MACOWAN has licked this strange household into fine theatrical shape.

If burning bags of coffee in Brazil appeared at one time the brightest reflection on the lunacy of twentieth-century economics, we don't need to go farther than the Berlin air-lift for a satiric pointer on the state of its international politics. This gallant but fantastic operation is the background—sometimes a trifle too noisy for the comfort of the cast—of a play at the New Lindsey by Mr. LIONEL BIRCH and Miss LORNA HAY, called *The Compelled People*. It is rather a clever play, because it nearly succeeds in persuading us that it is more serious than really it is. Looked at coldly it boils down to very little, to a question of personal scruple not altogether easy to believe in, yet as a study of frustration in a tired and hopeless city it has considerable interest. The talk is good, and if one asked why many of the discussions seem to end in a kind of verbal Indian rope-trick the authors would doubtless answer, and with reason, that this is just what happens with people whose minds have been batting round and round for a long time in the same closed circuit of suspicion and emotional fatigue.

The play is timed at a moment when a major Russian coup is expected shortly to pull the whole of Berlin behind the Iron Curtain, and takes place in the flat of two German film-stars—intellectuals, not the other sort

—von Gerhardt and his sister Friedl. Their liquor cupboard, boasting a tact-ful division between Scotch, Bourbon and vodka, confirms that they have friends in all camps, but they remain cynical about their conquerors and sceptical of any renaissance of German life in their generation. But as they are doing absolutely nothing, so far as we can gather, to bring it about, either politically or socially (e.g. by helping those with less well-found flats), their reluctance to seize their chances of using the air-lift in reverse to fly to England or America seemed to me unreal. In the end von Gerhardt weakens and goes, leaving his sister broken-hearted but resolutely staying on; nearly a tragic figure, but not quite, because it is difficult to see what she is staying for, with the Russians about to sweep in.

What the play does best is to give us the mental condition of these two and to convey the curious quality of their relationships with their visitors; with the married American with whom Friedl nearly escapes, the mellow Russian agent who tabs their movements, the Englishman from the Control Commission (a Wodehouse character but furiously suspected of being M.I.5) and the elegant German girl who has become a political prostitute. All this is life lived, so to speak, in a pressure-cooker, and the pressure is fairly constant. Apart from a tendency to whisper, unfortunate when Transport Command is overhead, Mr. ROBERT HENDERSON's production is very creditable to a club theatre. Miss ROSALIE CRUTCHLEY, who reminds one strangely of Miss MARGARET RAWLINGS, is particularly good as Friedl, a strong and honest character at the end of her tether. Mr. ERNEST MILTON, having set out to make von Gerhardt a highly theatrical figure, does so consistently, and the others in a good cast are all convincing.

There is not much to say in favour of *Sweethearts and Wives*, a new play by Mr. GILBERT, and Miss MARGARET HACKFORTH-JONES, at Wyndham's. It is a naval comedy in which the Fleet, alas, fails to get lit up. As I think other critics have pointed out, the inadequacies of its plot would have been less glaring in a musical, and Miss JESSIE MATTHEWS and Miss PATRICIA BURKE, both struggling bravely in adverse circumstances, could have been more usefully deployed in song. The piece has its moments, springing from the visit to Malta of a schoolmistress who insists, to the horror of her naval relations and her brass-hatted fiancé, on giving English lessons to an aspiring

Able Seaman; but they are intermittent, and the last act has scarcely any right to be there. Within ten days this remarkable mentor has the youth speaking like the Opposition Front Bench, which seems to put G. B. S. and Henry Higgins in their place. Judging by the stream of Hollywood creations in which Miss BURKE dazzles us, the

teacher's pay must have been at least ten times the maximum authorized by the Burnham Scale. Is it too much to ask that stage-dressing should be roughly in character, or would that be decadent realism? Miss TILSA PAGE, Mr. JACK RAINE and Mr. NOEL JOHNSON go down gallantly with all guns firing.
ERIC.

The Lost Pitch

(From "Men and Women.")

["Dr. Hermann Zeissl, head of the Austrian delegation, has complained to Unesco that no country is adhering to the musical standard of 'A' pitch, established at Vienna in 1885."—Daily paper.]

I
YOU see? Thus nation speaks to nation.
And is it still alive,
That tuning-fork's august vibration
Of eighteen-eighty-five?

II
You have seen, perhaps, in late November
The last leaf blown away:
This you forget—how then remember
That pure unsullied A?

III
Deaf to that perfect tone, the player
Plucks his discordant strings;

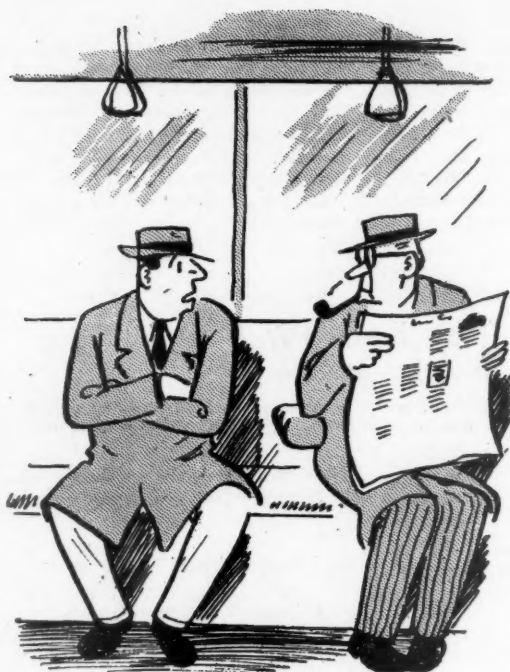
No doubt for us the earth is greyer
For such forgotten things.

IV
So music falters, and song, they say,
Is jangled the world over.
We laugh—for the sun is glad to-day,
You loved, and I the lover.

V
If eastward the sharp forgets the tune,
And westward the note is flatter—
Well, safe in our dear melodious June,
What, dearest, does it matter?



"Right-o, then—now that we're both comfortable."



Hottenwood

"Did anything come of all that fuss there was a short time ago about that chap Lynskey?"

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Victorian Age

Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (SYLVAN PRESS, 21/-) contains the comprehensive series of B.B.C. talks in which the Victorian age was reviewed and revalued during 1948. The planning of such a survey was, as Mr. HARMAN GRISEWOOD shows in his Foreword, an extremely complex task, and those concerned must be congratulated on the combination of thoroughness and lucidity which they achieved. The book is divided into five sections. In "The Theory of Progress" the contributors discuss the mood of optimism which reached its climax in the Exhibition of 1851, but declined, together with the piety which supported it, with the spread of Darwinism in the following decade. In "Victorian Religious Belief and Controversy" and "Man and Nature" the quarrel between orthodox Christianity and the agnosticism stimulated by the ideas of Darwin and his disciples is the main theme; though the moral earnestness diffused by the Evangelical movement and the reaction against Utilitarianism embodied in the Oxford Movement are also treated. "The Liberal Idea" unfolds the slow advance of democracy, Mr. Douglas Woodruff celebrating the virtues of a declining aristocracy, Mr. H. N. Brailsford tracing the revolt of the poor from Chartism to Keir Hardie, and other contributors dealing with the emancipation of women and the growth of imperialism. In the last section the chief theme is the expansion of collectivism towards the close of the century. A most informative and instructive book, which is perhaps a little cramped by the grim resolve of the contributors to avoid any suspicion of Stracheyan levity in their approach to the Victorians.

H. K.

Pro Armis Caritas

Pending the reign of universal law, a reign that will recognize mankind and the human being as more important than sovereign states, the Red Cross is as near as we have got in practice to the exercise of universal charity. Its latest martyr, Count FOLKE BERNADOTTE, looked forward to the day when the Red Cross motto "Charity Among Arms" should run *Instead of Arms* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 12/6). His last book, a record of the life-work ended by his assassination, closes with high hopes for his assassins and their foes. It is a tale of endless assignations with misery—with prisoners, with the sick, with the starving; of attempted (and often successful) intervention between the diabolic cruelty of our age and its victims. Its unassuming chapters have great scenes and moments; the Hamburg cemetery with its two nights' toll of 45,000 dead, and on one grave the word *Warum?*—the Greek Queen's intrepid visit to liberated Konitza. But the book deserves careful reading and re-reading for its dispassionate conclusions and for the material it presents to our own. Denounced for not denouncing Nazism—a gesture incompatible with his work—Count BERNADOTTE pointed out in 1947 how few denounced any so-called democracy enforced, as was the avowed Russian technique in Austria. "by dictatorial principles in order to achieve lasting results."

H. P. E.

Traveller's Harvest

Mr. WILLIAM PLOMER's short stories are distinguished by graciousness of style, imaginative sympathy and a wide variety of setting. They are quiet and untheatrical, but they have a singular power to illuminate significant stretches in the lives of people commonly passed over. Mr. PLOMER is fortunate enough to have travelled far and without hurry, and he admits his luck in a brief preface to *Four Countries* (CAPE, 10/6), which is so interesting that his critical conclusions would be welcome at greater length. To de Maupassant and Bunin he acknowledges his personal indebtedness, the latter's mordant tale of Capri, "The Gentleman from San Francisco," being, in his opinion, the best short story of this century; and he urges that too many modern pieces are undramatic trifles. "A short story," he says, "must let us into the secrets of other peoples' lives, and unless it lets us into their lives at a moment of crisis, it is unlikely to have much point or to be dramatic." In the sixteen polished and evocative stories collected here, and drawn from England, Greece, Africa and Japan, he is notably true to these theories. The crises he describes are none of them breakneck dénouements, but rather inward changes affecting the outlook of one person; they are not the less dramatic, and their manner is exceptionally vivid. Whether he is telling us of a Japanese country girl, more or less kidnapped to slave in a city hotel and coming in the end to like it, as in a "A Piece of Good Luck," or of a young English trader falling tragically in love with an African girl, as in "The Child of Queen Victoria," or of a Corfu fisherman trying to get news of his errant sister from a visiting smart-alec, as in "Nausicaa," Mr. PLOMER shows himself a master of his medium.

E. O. D. K.

Nollekens

J. T. SMITH's *Nollekens and His Times* (TURNSTILE PRESS, 10/6) is, as Mr. G. W. Stonier says in his excellent introduction to this reprint, one of the most curious and entertaining books in English. Nollekens was the most famous sculptor of his day ("I think my friend Joe Nollekens

can chop out a head with any of them," said Dr. Johnson), and SMITH, his biographer, served him as an unpaid model when a boy and kept in close touch with him in later life, expecting, from hints Nollekens let fall, that he would be handsomely mentioned in the sculptor's will. But all he received from the very large fortune amassed by Nollekens was £100. The bitterness of this disappointment flavours the whole book, SMITH tirelessly noting every instance of Nollekens' miserliness that he had observed or heard of, and so building up a wonderful picture of a cunning, dirty and yet by no means unlikeable old miser. To SMITH Nollekens' will was an infamous document, which he quotes in full. But the impression made by the very great number of small legacies in it is that Nollekens had a real desire to benefit others, but thought it best to postpone its indulgence till it could not damage him personally. Happily, this was not SMITH's opinion; for had he taken a favourable view of the throng of beneficiaries under Nollekens' will he would not have felt the keen emotion which gives such life to this picture of the old miser and the scenes in which he moved.

H. K.

Forms and Sensations

Unlike Wordsworth, who got an impressive quota of intimations of immortality out of a modest amount of nature-lore, Mr. E. L. GRANT WATSON produces his own pantheistic rabbit—a comparatively small one—out of a very much larger naturalist's hat. *Departures* (PLEIADES BOOKS, 15/-) is a series of short essays embodying his observations and their spiritual deductions. The observations are enchantingly or terrifyingly vivid, the deductions less impressive as they recede from their base. Starting with an enlightened school which let the boy rove the countryside, not only on Sunday but from 5 to 7 A.M. daily, the author condoned the keeper's larder for the freedom of copse and swamp; and discovered a naturalist's zest and a gift for its precise and attractive expression. These stood him in good stead when Wicken Fen was exchanged for the Fiji Islands and remotest Australia. No one is likely to forget the mesembryanthemums and banded wallabies of Bernier Island, the Fijian post-view—with a pig—of the prohibited technique of cannibalism. But the author handles his friends precisely as he handles soft-shelled baby turtles on their hazardous trek to the sea. As for "ruthless parasites and gormandizers," marine and terrestrial, "what faith," he asks, "can survive this vision?" None, obviously, which views the sole "Purpose" of things as originating in ourselves.

H. P. E.

The Peace of Jerusalem

The tale of the tragic condition of the peoples of Palestine in this generation, brought to a climax as it has been through persecutions of the Jews in Central Europe, stoppage of emigration to America and the emergence of conscious Arab nationalism, is only the latest chapter in an evilly colourful history stretching back through all human records. Rarely for more than a few years at a time has the tiny strip of land sacred to three great religions been free from armed invasion or civil war, while soil erosion, failing fertility, malaria and brigandage have been the perpetual accompaniment of foreign oppression and moral squalor. Even the visiting of hatred by the inhabitants on strangers who have intervened only to keep the peace, though difficult to endure with patience, is nothing new in the recital. In *A History of Palestine* (GOLLANCZ, 21/-), Dr. JAMES PARKES, though a good deal concerned to find

in a continuing if often tenuous thread of Jewish residence in the Holy Land through all its fortunes a basis for a claim to enter the country to-day "as of right and not on sufferance," none the less on the whole maintains a reasonable impartiality. His story of pilgrims and crusaders, of Druzes and Nestorians, of Qalaunids and Mamluks is better, with its authentic smack of Gibbon, than his account of recent unhappy disputations.

C. C. P.

The Wheatland

If you dislike fox-hunting you will loathe Miss FRANCES PITT's *Hounds, Horses and Hunting* (COUNTRY LIFE, £2 2s.); if not, you will be spellbound by Miss PITT's "all-round-my-hat" exposition of the "science and art of it." Co-master of *The Wheatland*, she devotes her introductory chapter to a lovingly-annotated history of that famous Shropshire pack, illustrated with numerous, most happily-chosen thumb-nail sketches, both from her own pen and from hunting authors way back before Nimrod, of characters of the hunting-field, men, women, hounds, horses and foxes brisk as a bright January morning. And that chapter is the keynote of the book, which gives the whole panorama of the hunting scene, from the management of kennels to the woes of a Master (very feelingly conveyed); from a delightful study of the author's first attempts to sit on the back of a feather-bed pony without falling off to a brilliant description of the declining days of the old "top-sawyer" who could still go like a bird across country as long as he could see hounds, but "if a strand of wire necessitated swerving right or left, he was like an unsighted greyhound, and gave it up in disgust." The broad sweep of its territory is the physical environment of *The Wheatland Hunt*. Miss PITT succeeds in describing the even broader sweep of the Hunt itself—the customs, habits, individuality, background, opinions, lives of its followers; an account that might make even the most fervid opponent of blood-sports wonder if it is not too easy a generalization to damn all hunting folk as "sadistic playboys." R. C. S.



H. F. WILES.



"Let's see—radio off, de-icers off, windows up, doors locked, driving-lights off, heater off, bonnet locked, roof locked, boot locked, filler-cap locked, ignition off . . ."

Cold War

WE are living on the edge of a volcano at Munton-on-Sea. Outwardly, since the editor of the *Munton Observer* declared that the correspondence was now closed, there has been a false air of tranquillity, but it is the sort of dubious tranquillity enjoyed by the citizens of Pompeii round about the end of July, A.D. 79.

It is several weeks since the first rumblings came with Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe's letter to the *Observer*, in which she accused Mrs. Hogg of trying to sabotage the Pleasant Tuesday Club by moving the whist-drives of the Thursday Social Association from Friday to Monday, on which evening, from time immemorial (1945) the Pleasant Tuesday Club had held its bridge-drives.

In her reply (published the following week) Mrs. Hogg denied emphatically that she was pursuing a policy of encirclement. She said that if competition was good for everybody, as stated by Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe in her other capacity as chairman of the Liberal Association, then Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe ought to be glad that the

Thursday Social bridge-drives had been moved to Monday. The competition thus afforded might make Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe and her fellow-members of the Pleasant Tuesday committee wake up to the fact that card-players in these days did not care to be fobbed off with a first prize consisting of a second-hand silver-plated egg-boiler which everybody knew had been a wedding-present to Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe hundreds of years ago.

The exact nature of Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe's reply to this letter is known only to herself and to the editor of the *Munton Observer*, who is reported to have gone ghastly white on reading it and then to have thrown it into the fire with a convulsive shudder. He declared the correspondence closed, but wrote a leading article in which he suggested that since exploratory sub-committees had failed to reach agreement the only solution was clearly a top-level discussion between Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe and Mrs. Hogg. Next day he received nine letters accusing him of being a "rascally appeaser," and hinting that he wanted

"another Munich," so he dropped the subject. His article, however, appears to have made some slight impression on Mrs. Hogg.

While disclaiming any direct communication with Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe, she is reported to have told the local fishmonger that (a) she was anxious for peace; (b) she always had been anxious for peace; (c) the crisis was not due to any action on the part of the Thursday Social or herself, but was entirely the work of the Pleasant Tuesday and Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe; (d) she was willing to accept any concessions that Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe was willing to make; (e) she would be glad to meet Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe at any time for a free and frank discussion not only about the Monday drives but about all outstanding questions between the Social Thursday and the Pleasant Tuesday, including spheres of influence for jumble collection and co-ordination of Bazaar and Bring-and-Buy dates; (f) the venue of her meeting with Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe would be a matter for negotiation, but owing to her arthritis it would have to

take place in her (Mrs. Hogg's) house, though she would give Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe absolutely free and unfettered choice between the dining-room and the drawing-room.

In an interview next day with the milkman Mrs. Johnson-Clitheroe said that it was impossible to make any reply to an offer made through such an unusual channel as the fishmonger, and that she proposed to ignore it altogether. She added that if Mrs. Hogg thought she was going to risk infection by entering Mrs. Hogg's house she (Mrs. Hogg) had another think coming.

So the matter rests for the present, but the more thoughtful card-players among us are aware that an eruption cannot be long delayed. The Pleasant Tuesday and the Social Thursday are not in an economic position to carry on the cold war much longer. Last week the Pleasant Tuesday gave nylons as a first prize and the Social Thursday replied with a skunk collar. It is clear that neither side can stand the pace indefinitely. D. H. B.

Other Side of the Lane

MUMMY! Mummy, if Christopher asks you, *don't* go up the bank to look at it, or over the field, but will you *promise* to climb up the ash-tree?

Well, the *door*, Mummy, that greeny-grey, very old door at the top of the bank, that one behind all the bushes that you couldn't get at until now they've chopped the bushes down and you can. What did you think it *was*, Mummy? Well, you might not have known it was there because the only way you could see it before was up the ash-tree—on the other side of the road—the one Christopher has for a peak. A *peak*, Mummy, it's something he knows about being on a peak and not speaking; but what *I* do, Mummy, is, I have a huge battering-ram and knock down the door, because when you're at the top of the tree you're just level with it. Only it's the other side of the road so you have to have a Bailey bridge.

Hilary thought what it was through the door was a field full of wild bulls and she wouldn't come up the bank except *behind* everyone and then she kept on slipping down to the bottom and then she *screamed* because she said we didn't wait, and Martin said she ought to be glad not to be waited for if it was a field of wild bulls and Christopher went down and pushed her up from underneath.

No, Mummy, it wasn't at all kind of him; he'd just let his ball roll down to the bottom so he had to go down anyway. Martin said what he thought it was was some steep steps leading down to an old well full of bones, and Hilary said why full of bones, because she'd caught up then, with Christopher pushing, and he said old *murdered* bones, and she said very solemnly "Bulls and bones," and Christopher laughed so much at bulls *and* bones, he dropped his ball again, and Martin said he'd be all day going up and down, what we ought to have was a lift, and I said perhaps it *was* a lift the other side, going down into the dungeons of a very old castle with a secret garden, and Hilary said an *enchanted* garden, and Christopher said she had fairy stories and things on the brain, he wished it would be a hidden treasure but no such luck, he guessed it was just a wood; and then he let his ball down *again*, Mummy.

When we looked at the door it hadn't got a handle, only a keyhole. So we looked through the keyhole, but it was all dark, and when Christopher came up again with his ball he said hadn't anyone thought of giving it a shove? So we all shoved, and it wasn't locked at all, Mummy, only it wouldn't open, and Hilary said it was a bull after all and he was leaning against it on the other side; and we all shoved again, and it was a sort of thick bush growing against the door, but we squeezed open enough to go

through one at a time, and Mummy, there wasn't anything there at all.

Well, it was just *nothing*. No, of course I don't mean just air or we should have fallen into it, but it was a sort of ditch with an old rusty-looking bucket and an old tin in it, and a bit of grass, and when we climbed out of the ditch, where do you think we were? Mummy, it's somewhere you *do* know, so you *can* think. Well, it was in that field the other side of the field with the path, only if you were *in* it you'd never know the door was there because of being in a ditch. Christopher said he'd told us so, but he hadn't.

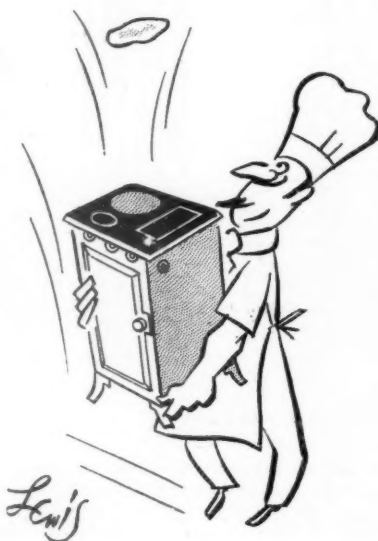
Anyway, it *was* sort of secret after all, because it was hidden, a sort of robber's den it might have been, and now when I'm up in the tree, Mummy, I'm going to be the look-out, not not speaking on any peak but ready to shout if the enemy comes. Mummy, if you want to see our secret door, *please* will you climb up the ash-tree, because it does look so secret from there, much nicer than being at the top of the bank or in the field—*much* nicer; so will you, Mummy, will you, *please*?

The Radio Dramatist

XI

READERS who are familiar with Shakespeare's great work *Macbeth* will remember that during the commotion which follows the discovery of the murdered Duncan, Lady Macbeth is made to exclaim "Help me hence, ho!" Now this is a phrase which involves the expenditure of a good deal of breath, particularly on the final "ho!"—a word obviously not meant to be whispered. I do not for one moment suggest that Shakespeare put down the first thing that came into his head. In his subtle way he may have been trying to show, by Lady Macbeth's vigorous outcries, that her fainting-fit was an elaborate fraud. My point is this. Let us suppose that in the heat of the moment an aspirate be dropped. "Elp me hence, ho!" Bad, no doubt, but by no means fatal, *on the stage*. The actress, if she is worth her salt, will be reeling to and fro, and perhaps blowing her cheeks in and out; the thanes will be moving nimbly to catch her. All is glitter and movement, and the dropping of an "h" is neither here nor there.

What will be the effect of a similar blunder on the radio? Husband and wife, eager to savour to the full a treat keenly anticipated through the tiring



day in office and home, listen intently as the story unfolds itself, hanging upon every word. "I must say," ventures the wife, sipping her cocoa, "that I didn't think much of Miss Batey's 'When in swinish sleep their drenched natures lie.'" "Miss Batey is doing very well," retorts the husband. "Wait till you hear her 'Help me hence, ho!'" In such circumstances a verbal stumble is disastrous. Moreover, one mistake leads to another, and in this case it is not unlikely that Macduff, momentarily shaken, might render the next line as "Lake to the loody." One can hardly doubt that the listener, incensed beyond endurance, will switch off his set.

I have gone into this matter at some length because I wish to emphasize the enormous importance of good dialogue in the radio play. By "good dialogue" I mean, of course, dialogue that satisfies the peculiar demands of radio technique. Let no one imagine that I am launching an attack on Shakespeare. I suggest that we should try to construct some dialogue. We will choose a situation at random: no matter if it be a little hackneyed. Mrs. Hare, a wealthy recluse, has presented an ape, token of admiration from an old flame, to the Zoological Society. A Fellow calls to take it away.

Mrs. Hare. I trust that every effort will be made by the authorities at the Zoo to provide the creature with an ample supply of whatever foodstuffs he appears to relish. I have noticed a leaning towards brussels sprouts and cashmere stockings.

Fellow. While we are, of course, always glad to acquire an ape gratis, I must point out that such advice savours of arrogance when given to one who has devoted the fervour of youth and the wisdom of maturity to a profound study of the digestive system of the anthropoids.

Now of course all this is as wrong as it well can be. The dramatist must enter into his characters, think their thoughts and feel their emotions. In this case he has got to put himself in the place of a woman parting for ever with an ape which is associated in her mind with the romantic past. Mrs. Hare's cold formality now appears utterly out of place. Moreover, her first sentence is too long and will hardly be completed without an unseemly gasp. Her sibilants in the last few words will raise an intolerable racket if the set happens to be badly tuned. The Fellow's part is more in character. It is not every day that he is given an ape, yet he wishes to make it clear that Mrs. Hare is not going to ride rough-

shod over the Zoological Society on the strength of her gift. Nevertheless, here again the lines will hardly be spoken from "I must point out" to "anthropoids" without distress. They will have to be shortened. Let us try again.

Mrs. Hare. Take him—but feed him well. A potato or two—a bit of carpet—

Fellow. Thank you very much for the ape. We know quite well how to feed him, and will quickly win his love. Stand back, by Darwin, you—! (*The snarl of an ape is heard.*)

This is much better. Mrs. Hare shows a natural emotion, the Fellow is less prosy, sibilants have been reduced to a minimum, and the listener's interest is kept alive by a suggestion that ape and Fellow may be involved in a struggle.

The radio dramatist must always cut and polish his dialogue in this way. Brevity is the thing to aim at. Macbeth takes about six lines to say, in effect, that he would not have minded very much had Banquo's ghost been a rhinoceros. Here I could be tempted into a digression to investigate Macbeth's surprising familiarity with the rhinoceros, but I will content myself with saying that had Shakespeare written for the radio he would have cut, and cut ruthlessly.



"Hullo, is that the editor of 'The Times'?"

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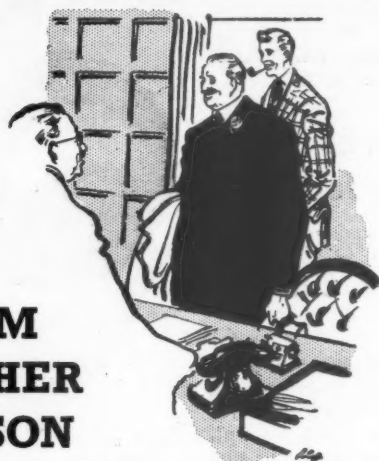
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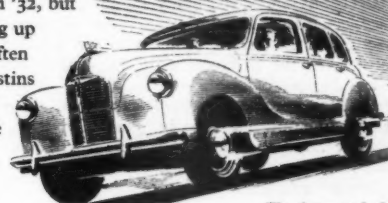
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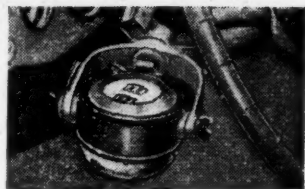


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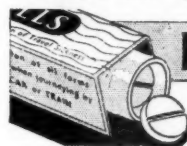


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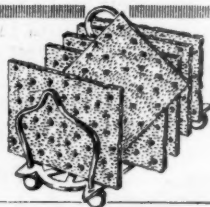
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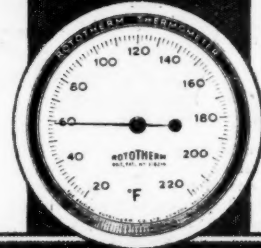
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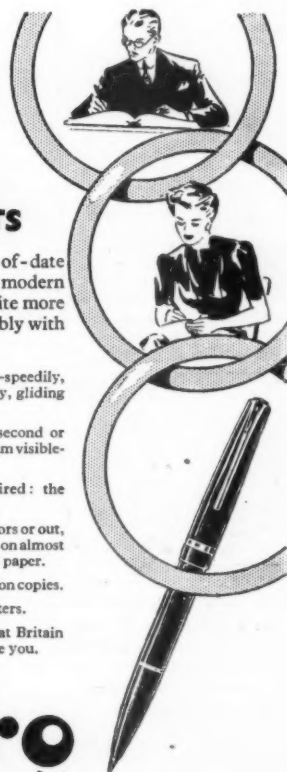
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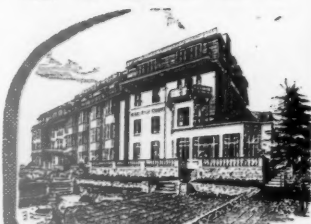
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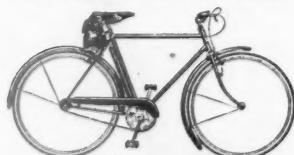
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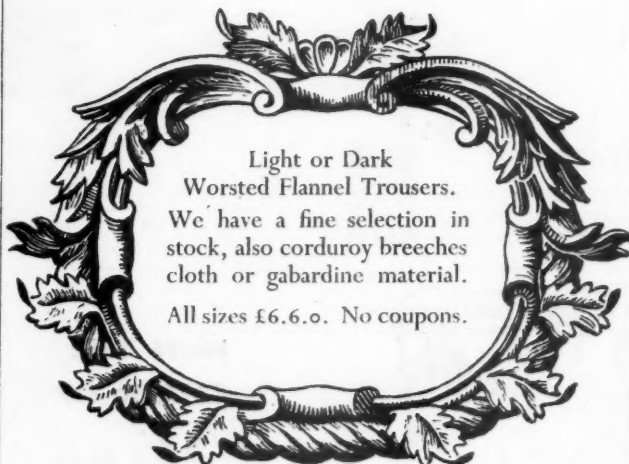
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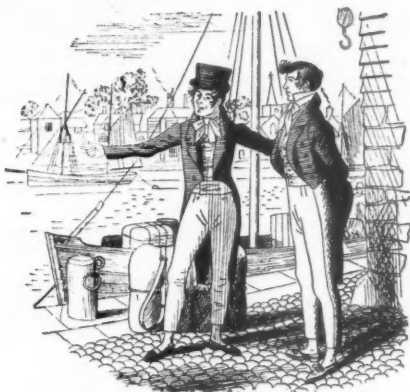


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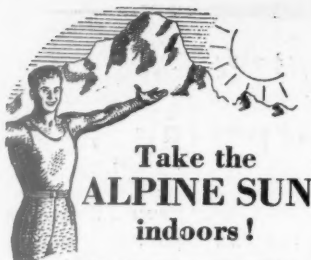
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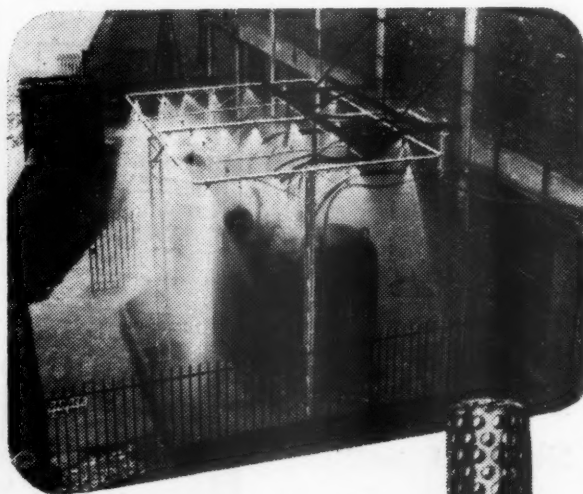
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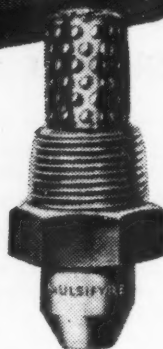
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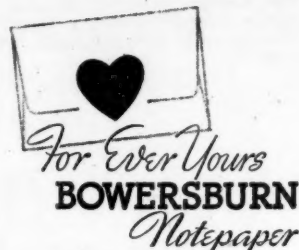


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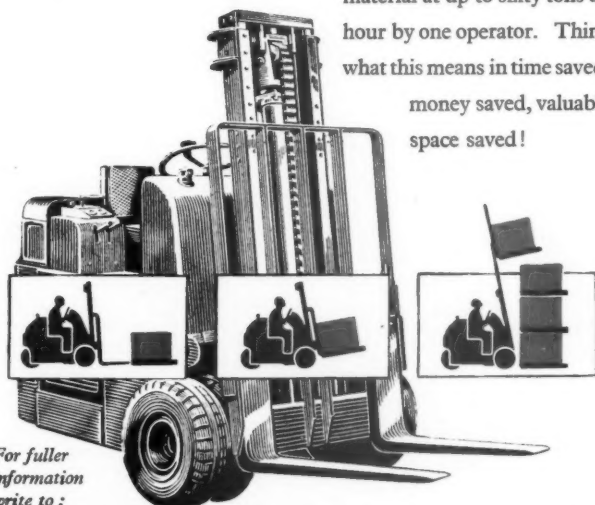


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